The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)

Edited by
Hugh Kennedy

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(C. 950–1800)

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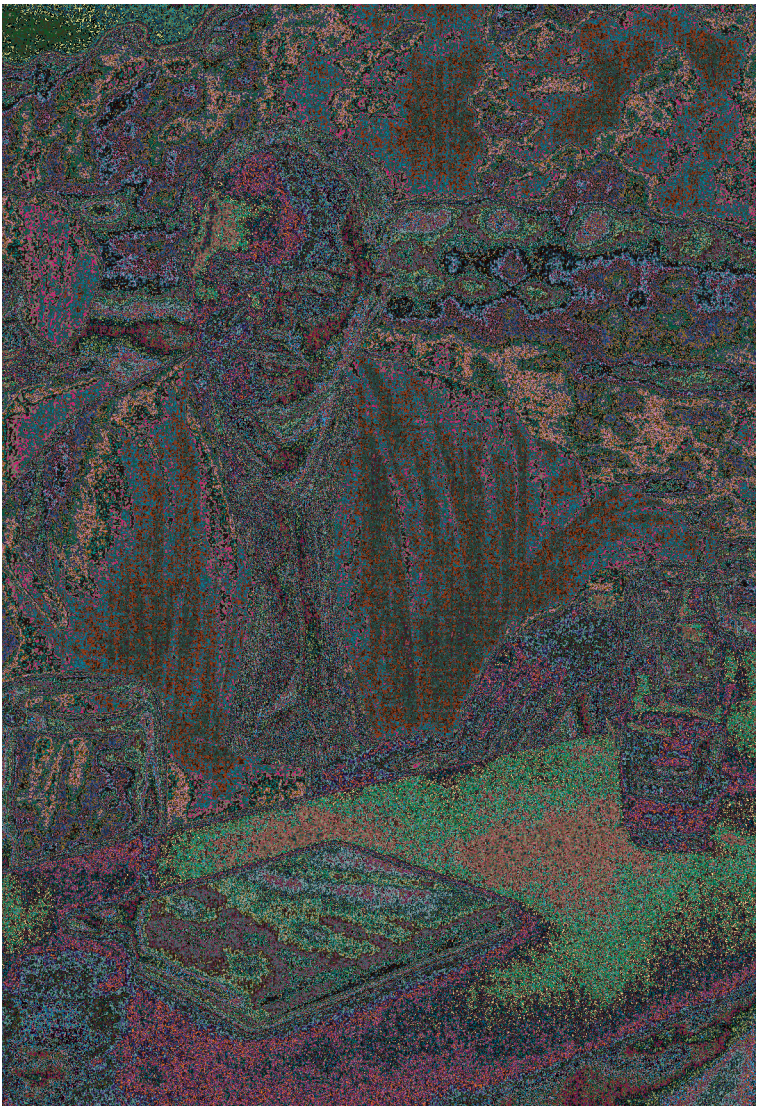

Ulrich Haarmann

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HUGH KENNEDY

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All who were present will remember the friendship and scholarly expertise of Ulrich Haarmann who tragically died so shortly afterwards, at the very height of his powers. This volume is respectfully dedicated to memory the memory of this great scholar and gentleman.

Hugh Kennedy, June 2000

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
GAS	C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*
EI2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second edition
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
REI	Revue d'Etudes Islamiques

LINGUA FRANCA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: JOHN WANSBROUGH AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MEDIAEVAL EGYPT

Michael Brett

I

John Wansbrough is not normally associated with the history of mediaeval Egypt. His fame as the author of *Quranic Studies* and *The Sectarian Milieu*, concerning the development (rather than the origins) of Islam, has obscured the fact that the subject of his doctoral thesis was the series of diplomatic and commercial agreements between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Italian city-states presrved in the archives of Venice and Florence in Italian and in Arabic versions. Between 1961 and 1971, the outcome of this study was six articles on the documents in question, mainly in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.[1] These raised, but did not specifically address, a problem to which he referred at the time, namely the difficulty of deciding the precise relationship of the Italian and the Arabic versions to each other: to what extent, if at all, were they translations the one of the other. Some thirty years after he turned away from the whole question to the study of the Qur'an, his solution to that vexing problem is now the key to a very much wider thesis on the subject of communication and language in the Mediterranean over the last four thousand years, entitled *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean*.[2]

The first chapter is entitled 'Orbits', in the original sense of 'circuits', on the principle that what is sent out will eventually return.

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[1] J.E. Wansbrough, "A Mamluk letter of 877/1473", *BSOAS*, 24, (1961), 200–13; "A Moroccan amir's commercial treaty with Venice of the year 913/1508", *BSOAS*, 25, (1962), 449–71; "A Mamluk ambassador to Venice in 913/1507", *BSOAS*, 26, (1963), 503–30; "Venice and Florence in the Mamluk commercial privileges", *BSOAS*, 28, (1965), 483–523; "A Mamluk commercial treaty concluded with the Republic of Florence, 894/1489", in S.M. Stern, ed., *Documents from Islamic Chanceries* (Oxford, 1965), 39–79; "The safe-conduct in Muslim chancery practice", *BSOAS*, 34, (1971), 20–35. For a complete list of his relevant publications, see "Published writings of J.E. Wansbrough", *BSOAS*, 57, (1994), 4–13.

[2] J. Wansbrough, *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean* (London, 1996).

In the case of *Lingua Franca*, the circuits in question are both commercial and political, involving the dispatch of goods for trade, and armies or messengers to demand obedience. What returns is either some other commodity, or, at a very elementary level, tribute. Over the last four thousand years, these circuits of trade and empire in and around the Mediterranean have inscribed themselves on the map with ever-increasing density, spiralling up through the centuries to culminate, for Wansbrough's purpose, in the sixteenth century. Although the pattern of such circuits will have varied over time, their history reflects the steadily increasing amount of economic and political activity in the region, building up from the Bronze Age to that of Philip II as described in the work of Fernand Braudel.

This application of the Braudelian concept of the *longue durée* to the entire duration of the Mediterranean world sets the scene for a more particular attention to the factors permitting the creation of such circuits, beginning with the technology of transport, but rapidly proceeding to the skills required to put that technology to use: the commercial expertise required to operate a profitable trade cycle, the administrative expertise to rule an empire. The two skills, as Chaudhuri has pointed out in yet another rider on the theme of the *longue durée*,[3] were to a large extent one and the same. What Wansbrough is particularly concerned with is the common skill of communication: the message which elicits a reply. From the start of his inquiry in the Bronze Age, the message in question involved the skill of writing, so that his subject is speedily defined as *diplomatic contact*, and its focus as *chancery practice*, the subject of his doctoral research, and the topic of his second chapter. Here we find a model description of a mediaeval document produced by a mediaeval chancery in Arabic, Greek or Latin, which will provide any student with an ideal introduction to the practice in question. What is made abundantly clear, however, is that such documents were not simply applications of particular written languages to diplomatic purposes, but creative adaptations of such languages to a common rule of interlingual communication provided by their format, their script, their simplified syntax and their vocabulary, at once narrow and eclectic. The result, described in Wansbrough's third chapter, was a *lingua franca*, a medium of diplomacy in the original sense of the

[3] K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean* (Cambridge, 1985), 16.

word, beginning at Ugarit and ending, for his purposes, at Venice in 1507. In Wansbrough's own terse formula, this *lingua franca* was a sub-system of several languages, which inevitably changed over time. Whatever the languages in question, however, chancery practice represented a meta-language which dictated the arrangement of the text and identified the equivalent terms to be employed. On this basis the parallellism of the Arabic and Italian versions of the commercial treaties between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Italian city-states can be explained. It is the result of their parallel composition by Arab and Italian scribes familiar with the format and the vocabulary to be employed, collaborating with each other to produce two equivalent texts.

In this way, the last element in the document was the specific content. The conventional form of the document, the sequence of its elements, the syntax, the phraseology and the vocabulary, all combined to produce a standard vehicle for the authoritative record of what had actually been agreed: to revive what I imagine to be the long-forgotten phrase of Marshall MacLuhan, the medium was at least three-quarters of the message. In other circumstances, it might well be the message itself. In a subsequent review article, Wansbrough turned to an examination of the chancery practice of the Norman kingdom of Sicily, which in the course of the twelfth century produced documents in Arabic as well as Greek and Latin.[4] Those documents had previously been studied in the unpublished D. Phil thesis of Jeremy Johns, 'The Muslims of Norman Sicily, c. 1060–c. 1194' (Oxford, 1983), who remarked on the major change that came over these documents in the middle of the century. Over a period of some twenty to thirty years, they acquired the magisterial appearance of the products of the Fatimid chancery in Egypt, lavish in format and splendid in calligraphy. They formed part of what Johns considers to be a deliberate attempt on the part of Roger II to invest himself with the insignia of majesty, in extensive imitation of the Fatimid Caliphate.[5] Among the documents in question were splendiferous lists of taxpayers, issued to the major feudatories in place of the original lists compiled at the beginning of the century.

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[4] J. Wansbrough, "Diplomatica Siciliana", *BSOAS*, 47, (1984), 10–21.

[5] J. Johns, "The Norman kings of Sicily and the Fatimid caliphate", *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 15, (1993), 133–59.

As lists of such taxpayers, however, the new documents were incomplete and inadequate; it was the document itself which served as the title to the estate and its taxpayers.

II

Both the Italian and the Sicilian documents may seem marginal to the subject of Egyptian historiography, important as they may be in their own right and in the conclusions to be drawn from them. They illustrate, however, what Wansbrough calls a 'field of force', pursuing the electrical metaphor of a circuit, namely the extent of the authority of the issuing body. If only as an example to be admired and imitated, the Fatimid Caliphate had clearly made its presence felt in Sicily on the edge of its particular field, however shrunken that field may have become in the last years of the dynasty. In the heyday of the dynasty in Egypt, from 969 to 1060, its force had spread out to the entire Islamic world, in three concentric circles. The first consisted of Egypt and the bulk of Syria, where the Caliph ruled as well as reigned. The second was formed by those realms where he reigned but did not rule: places like Ifriqiya, Sicily, Aleppo, the Yemen, Multan, and very briefly, from 1058 to 1060, Baghdad itself, where the prayer was said in his name by rulers over whom he had no administrative control. The third was the rest of the Islamic world, lands over which he neither ruled nor reigned, but over which he claimed sovereignty as the representative of God on earth. In all three circles his writ ran in the form of documents requesting and requiring the recipient either to hear and obey, or at the very least to recognise the existence of the Caliph's claims. The originals may be lost, and few copies may have survived, but the production was evidently very large. The fragments from the Genizah collections edited and translated by Geoffrey Khan show the chancery responding to incoming requests with administrative dispositions and appointments couched in the appropriate manner.[6] Not only do the various formulae employed in the production authenticate and validate the decree; they thereby proclaim the divine right of the Caliph to issue the document in the name of God.

[6] G. Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. nos. 115–24.

If that were all, it would almost be enough. As a source for our own historiography, the medium continues to be the message, impressive witness to the administration of which it was the tool. The occasion for the document, the incidental information it contains, and the decision it hands down, serve principally to exemplify the character of the genre. They are in any case frequently missing, in whole or in part, depriving the documents, in the original or in quotation, of much of their value as a record. And since, in Stern's words, the number of such documents still remains 'pitifully small', even when supplemented by the copies surviving in quotation in the works of later authors,[7] his conclusion that those that exist are chiefly valuable for the study of the practices of the Fatimid chancery may seem hard to resist.[8] As far as the Fatimids' own historiography is concerned, however, it would seem that the products of the Fatimid chancery were an important source for the composition of the dynastic record, and thus an important source of the information preserved in the chronicles. In that composition, the practices of the chancery, in which the information to be broadcast was moulded into the format of the document to give the desired message, were paramount. As Marshall MacLuhan went on to say of television: the medium was the massage.

The proof of this inelegant proposition, if proof there be, is provided by a *sijill*, an official letter in the name of the Caliph al-Mustanṣir, 1036–1094, sent to the Fatimid *dāʿī* and *amīr* in the Yemen, al-Sulayḥī, in the year 445/1053–4. This has survived as the fifth in a miscellaneous collection of al-Mustansir's correspondence with the Sulayhids. Copied by the Fatimid faithful in the Yemen in the years following their refusal to recognise the succession of the Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ to the Imamate in 1130–1; discovered in India, the present centre of their sect; the manuscript is now in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. The collection was described by H. Hamdani in the *Bulletin* of the School for 1933–5, and published in Cairo by A.M. Magued in 1954.[9] I have described and partially translated the *sijill* in question in two previous articles,

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[7] Cf. e.g. the collection of 23 such copies, mainly from the twelfth century, edited by G. el-Din El-Shayyal, *Maǧmūʿat al-wathāʾiq al-fāṭimiyya* (Cairo, 1958).

[8] S.M. Stern, *Fatimid Decrees. Original Documents from the Fatimid Chancery* (London, 1964), 14.

[9] *Al-Sijillāt al-Mustanṣiriyya*, MS, Library of the School of Oriental and African

in 1979 and 1982.[10] It is an announcement of the victory of Cairo over the rebellious sultan Muʿizz b. Bādīs, to be read in the pulpits as a token of the triumph of the Fatimid cause. Couched in the format described by Wansbrough, though as a copy it lacks the original signature and other appropriate marks, it evidently fulfilled the primary purpose of the chancery document, to declare the supremacy of the issuing authority. That supremacy is established within the document by the titulature of the Imam-Caliph, rehearsed at length in the preamble, which employs a rhetorical vocabulary extending into the text of the message itself. That vocabulary was clearly not intended, like that of Wansbrough's documents, for comprehension beyond the borders of Islam and Arabic, except as the verbiage of an impressive and clearly recognisable script, symbolic of its majestic source, which would eventually be imitated by the likes of Roger II. The script itself, of course, together with the whole emblematic character of the original, has not survived the copying, which has nevertheless sought to preserve the text as a sacred utterance of the monarch who had transferred the mission of the dynasty to its representatives in the Yemen and Gujerat. The result, ironically, has been to transform the *lingua franca* of the chancery document into the hermetic language of a closed sect.

Valuing the document for reasons quite unconnected with the occasion for its composition, the copyist has mistaken both the date and at least one important detail in the account of the Zirid affair which is the substance of the text. Such details were by no means irrelevant at the time. Like the administrative dispositions published by Khan, most notably no. 117, the *sijill* was composed upon receipt of a report from the field, undoubtedly of the kind exemplified by the Genizah documents.[11] It was, however, not the first of its kind. In publicising the report of the Fatimid envoy who had been dispatched to Ifriqiya, with the good news that the wretched Muʿizz ibn Bādīs was besieged in his capital while the rest of the country

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Studies, London, catalogue no. 27155; no. 5, fo. 15 ro–17 vo.; H.F. Hamdani, "The letters of al-Mustanṣir bi-llah", *BSOAS*, 7, (1933–5), 307–324; A.M. Magued, ed., *Sijillāt Mustanṣiriyya* (Cairo, 1954).

[10] M. Brett, 'Sijill al-Mustanṣir', in *Actes du Premier Congres d'Histoire et de la Civilisation du Maghreb, Tunis, 1954*, 2 vols. (Tunis, 1979), i, 101–10; idem, "Fatimid historiography: a case study—the quarrel with the Zirids, 1048–58", in D.O. Morgan, ed., *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), 47–59.

[11] Khan, *Documents*, section XIV, "Reports to the Chancery", nos. 108–14.

had returned to its Fatimid allegiance, the *sijill* refers to a previous letter announcing the departure of the envoy. It is very likely that this previous letter had proceeded in the same manner to refer to a previous announcement of the capture and humiliation of a Zirid ambassador to Baghdad. It is certain that the series continued with an announcement to celebrate the arrival of the envoy Ibn Mulhim at Cairo, bringing with him the booty from the battle of Ḥaydarān which is itemised in the Egyptian chronicles. They itemise it in this way because, as a comparison with the account of the extant *sijill* reveals, their narrative of the affair depends upon the pronouncements of these open letters, whose highly questionable, but immensely flattering, version of events has become the basis of the Egyptian tradition in this matter.

It is not clear to what extent the Fatimid chronicles habitually relied upon the products of the chancery for their history of the dynasty. It may be suspected that similar letters giving an equally vainglorious account of the fall of Baghdad to al-Basāsirī in 1058, when the prayer was offered in the name of al-Mustanṣir, provided the chronicler Ibn Muyassar with the basis of his statement that 'the Fatimid *daʿwa* was established at Baghdad after fierce fighting, as soon as the chests of treasure and the troops arrived from Egypt'.[12] But the account of the affair is so overlaid with recrimination that any firm indication of the source has been lost.[13] That is not, however, the case with the Egyptian version of the battles of Ramla against the Crusaders at the beginning of the twelfth century. No official letter survives, but at least two are on record as having been sent to Damascus in 1103 and 1105, inviting the Seljuk Duqaq and his successor Ṭughtakīn to join forces with Cairo in the holy war. The trace of these letters in the Egyptian tradition may be detectable in the use of the honorific Sharaf al-Maʿālī in place of the more usual Samāʾ al-Mulk to refer to the son of the Fatimid Wazir al-Afḍal in the account of the second battle of Ramla in 1102—a use

[12] Ibn Muyassar, *Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. Massé, Cairo, 1919; ed. Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid, *Choix de passages de la chronique d'Egypte d'Ibn Muyassar Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf ibn Ǧalab Rāghib m.667H, selection faite par Taqiyy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī en l'année 814H* (Cairo, 1981), *sub anno* 450.

[13] See my article, "The execution of al-Yāzūrī", in *Proceedings of the 4th and 5th International Colloquium on Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, (Leuven, 1998).

which caused Ibn al-Athīr to speak of two sons of the Wazir instead of one.

Still more confusingly, and much more importantly, the date of 496/1103 given for the first letter, in which the relative success of the Egyptians in that battle was no doubt glowingly described, may well explain the fact that in the Egyptian tradition the battle itself is dated to 1103. This dating is in contradiction to all the other sources, and is certainly wrong; nevertheless it has driven both later Arabic historians like Ibn al-Athīr and al-Maqrīzī, and modern writers such as Grousset and Runciman, to wrestle with the possibility of two battles rather than one. But the absence of any date from the narrative other than that of the letter itself is typical of the *sijill* of 445, in which the desired impression is conveyed without recourse to specific chronology. In the case of the second battle of Ramla, the mistake may have been natural, almost inevitable. As luck would have it, we may indeed have the report from the field which provided the chancery with the gist of the letter in question. By an astonishing coincidence, Khan has discovered and published a missive to the Fatimid chancery from the time of al-Afḍal. Written by the commander of an army in battle against the Crusaders, it gives news of the heroic capture of a Frankish fortress strongly reminiscent of the storming of the Crusader castle at Ramla in 1102. It would be ungrateful to complain that the date is missing; what the fragment reveals is the practice of the Fatimid chancery in full flow, working as ever to generate a favourable version of events for public consumption.[14]

The practitioners of the art were undoubtedly proud of their skill, displayed to perfection by the secretary of state Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, who composed a manual on the subject, the *Qānūn Dīwān al-Rasā'il*. The most prominent figure in the chancery in the first half of the twelfth century, he was chosen to compose the *sijill* on the death of the Caliph al-Mustaʿlī and the accession of his son al-Āmir in 1101, and even more importantly, the *Hidāya al-Āmiriyya*, the letter defending the Mustaʿlian succession against the rival claims of the Nizaris, which was appointed to be read from the pulpits in the manner of

[14] Khan, *Documents*, no. 111. Cf. M. Brett, "The battles of Ramla (1099–1105)", in U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet, eds., *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, (Leuven, 1995), 17–37, esp. pp. 28–9.

the *sijill* of 445. As a writer whose abilities were clearly recognised from an early age, he may well have composed the letters to Damascus on which I suggest the Egyptian history of the battles of Ramla was based. The question might have been settled once and for all had his dynastic chronicle, perhaps composed in his official capacity, survived. What we have instead is his biographical history of the Fatimid wazirs, *Al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*. Here in the notice of the tragic figure of al-Yāzūrī, appointed in 1050 and executed in 1058, we find a wholly legendary tale of the quarrel between the Fatimids and the Zirid sultan Muʿizz b. Bādīs. It turns upon the obstinate refusal of 'this stupid Berber' to address the new Wazir with his proper title of ʿAbd or Servant of the Commander of the Faithful, continuing to use the expression Ṣanīʿa or Creature of the Commander of the Faithful in his official correspondence. Ṣanīʿa was in fact the grander title, but al-Yāzūrī would have been so incensed by this breach of protocol that when remonstrations and threats had failed, he sent the Arab tribes of the Banu Hilāl to punish the offender, thereby bringing about the downfall described in the *sijill* of 445.[15]

III

The fact remains that, of all the vast production of the Fatimid chancery, very little survives; and we must wonder why. In discussing the documentary evidence on which *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean* is based, Wansbrough repeatedly, and naturally, insists upon the chance of survival as well as upon the chance of production. As Stern pointed out, the survival of originals depends as a rule upon an institutional continuity which he found lacking in Islam; it was no coincidence that those which he published in his *Fatimid Decrees* had been preserved by non-Muslim, specifically Christian communities.[16] That is equally true of Wansbrough's Mamluk treaties, preserved in the archives of Venice and Florence, and of the Genizah

[15] Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Al-Ishāra ilā man nāla al-wizāra*, ed. A. Mukhlis, *BIFAO*. 25, (1925), 49–112, 26 (1926), 49–70; 25, pp. 71–2 (40–1). For the author and his works, see *EI*2, s.v., art. El-Shayyal, and for the *Hidāya al-Āmiriyya*, S.M. Stern, "The epistle of the Fatimid Caliph al-Āmir (al-Hidāya al-Āmiriyya)—its date and purpose", *JRAS*, (1950), 20–31.

[16] Stern, *Fatimid Decrees*, 4.

material published by Khan. In the same way, the *sijill* of 445 owes its survival to the institutional continuity of an isolated sect. In the case of the Fatimids, the dynasty in Egypt was abolished in 1171, and it would be easy to conclude that its documentation died with it. But the question is a little more complicated.

It is certainly true that the dynasty and its religious as well as its political claims were conclusively rejected by Islam as a whole, a rejection which we can see at work at the level of the chancery document, the *sijill* in which those claims were broadcast. A famous anecdote is told for example by Ibn Khallikān, of how the great Imam and Caliph al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allah was challenged upon his entry into Cairo in 973 to prove his ancestry; his reply was to draw his sword as his *nasab* or name, and throw down his gold coins as his *ḥasab* or ancestry.[17] The purpose of the anecdote, as Bernard Lewis remarked,[18] was to portray him as an unscrupulous upstart; but the sword was called Dhū'l-Fiqār and the coins were stamped with an ʿAlid legend. The message was that of the long letter he addressed at the same time to the Carmathians of Bahrayn,[19] parodied by his enemies along with all the other claims of the dynasty. I have discussed this element of parody in the accounts of Fatimid origins at some length.[20] It was a polemical device which the dynasty itself habitually employed: e.g. the description of the erring Zirid sultan Muʿizz b. Bādīs as Mudhall (Dejected) b. Bādīs in the poetry of Ibn Ḥayyūs.[21] But it told against them in the end, most conspicuously perhaps in the denunciation of Fatimid claims to an ʿAlid ancestry published by the ʿAbbasids at Baghdad in 1011.[22] Their message failed to survive.

The medium for its propagation, on the other hand, quite obviously did. Although the bulk of both documents and chronicles from the Fatimid period is now lost, it is clear that they survived exten-

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[17] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* (Beirut, 1968), iii, 82 (biography of Ibn al-Ṭabāṭabā, no. 342).

[18] B. Lewis, "An interpretation of Fatimid history", *Colloque internationale sur l'histoire du Caire* (1969), (Cairo, 1972), 287.

[19] Al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz al-ḥunafā'*, ed. al-Shayyal and Ahmad, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1967–73), i, 189–201.

[20] M. Brett, "The Mīm, the ʿAyn and the making of Isma'ilism", *BSOAS*, 57, (1994), 25–39.

[21] Ibn Ḥayyūs, *Diwān*, ed. Mardam Bey (Damascus, 1951), 490.

[22] Cf. P.H. Mamour, *Polemics on the Origin of the Fatimi Caliphs*, London, 1934; F. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: their history and doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), 109.

sively into the Mamluk period to inform the encyclopaedic writings of al-Qalqashandī, al-Maqrīzī and the rest of that great fifteenth-century array of authors. The survival of the chronicles in the original or in reproduction can be traced in quotation, and ascribed to the historiographical tradition represented for example by Ibn Muyassar at the beginning of the Mamluk period. That of the documents quoted so extensively by al-Qalqashandī is more problematic. Ockham's razor excludes the hypothesis of some lost compilation as the source of his information. The simplest suggestion is that the originals themselves had survived, preserved through the institutional continuity of the Egyptian state long after the dynasty itself had disappeared. Therein, perhaps, lies the key to the real problem, not why this material failed to survive the twelfth century, but why, together with the Fatimid chronicles, it failed to survive the fifteenth. The critical event may well have been the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, putting an end to what Hitti called 'the last of the medieval Muslim states',[23] together with its archival tradition and its literary school. Stern's law, if it may be so called, would have operated, not with the extinction of the Fatimid dynasty, but only with the abolition of the state they had created.

A thesis would be required to demonstrate the point. The institutional continuity of the Egyptian chancery, however, is not in doubt. The purposes of a Maqrīzī and a Qalqashandī were not, of course, those of the Fatimids, but among them was the evident need of the Mamluk administration to perpetuate the documentary form established under their predecessors. If the Fatimid chancery had failed to get the message of the dynasty across to the world through the elaborate medium it employed, that medium was freed by the disappearance of the dynasty to develop into the efficient instrument of communication which is the focus of Wansbrough's work.

[23] P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 1st ed. (London, 1937), Part V.

EGYPT AND ALEPPO IN IBN AL-ʿADĪM'S *BUGHYAT AL-ṬALAB FĪ TA'RĪKH ḤALAB*

David Morray

Ibn al-ʿAdīm's (fragmentary) biographical dictionary of people associated with northern Syria, the *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, is not the most obvious source for the historiography of Islamic Egypt. However, a trawl through the extant biographical notices is able to reveal something of relations between Ayyubid Aleppo and Ayyubid Egypt.

Ibn al-ʿAdīm was born in 588/1192, and died in 660/1262. His life therefore almost exactly spans the era of the western Ayyubids, that is, the principal Ayyubids of the Levant. Member of one of the leading *muta'mmimūn* families of Aleppo, which had supplied five *qāḍī*s for the city in as many generations, he combined the *tadrīs* of two of the leading Ḥanafī *madrasa*s of Aleppo with an increasing number of diplomatic missions for the city's rulers, eventually abandoning the cloister for the court.

With the *Bughya*, Ibn al-ʿAdīm does for Aleppo what al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī did for his city and Ibn ʿAsākir for Damascus. Anyone who has ever lived in or visited the city and its hinterland, which are described in a topographical introduction, is eligible for a place in its pages. There are no time limits: pre-Islamic figures rub shoulders with contemporaries of the author.

Only about a quarter of the work has survived: most of the topographical introduction; a clutch of volumes from the beginning of the alphabet, beginning with Aḥmad b. Jaʿfar and ending with Saʿīd b. Salām; and one volume which seems to have been at the end of the notices of men (there was also a section on women). This volume contains notices of men who were known by their *kunya*s or *nisbas*.

Some idea of what this diminution means in practice will be obtained when one sees how few of the notices of members of the populous house of Ayyūb have survived: six, of which only two are

politically important: al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl b. al-ʿĀdil I,[1] and al-Nāṣir Dāʾūd b. Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā,[2] both rulers of Damascus.

The biographical notice in the *Bughya* follows a more or less standard pattern. After the name of the subject, there is an abstract giving, first of all, the subject's connection with the catchment area of the dictionary. This is usually followed by an appraisal of his qualities, and then the salient points of his career. The emphasis varies according to what he did. If he was a traditionnist, for example, or combined *taḥdīth* with his other activity or activities, a list of all the people he transmitted from and to will be given. Then will follow as many illustrative items as either Ibn al-ʿAdīm can find, or sees fit to include. Sources for these vary. Sometimes it is from Ibn al-ʿAdīm himself. Sometimes he acquires the information from an informant. Written sources include a number of earlier dictionaries doing for other cities and towns (notably Baghdad and Damascus) what Ibn al-ʿAdīm has done for Aleppo. If a subject in an earlier work also happened to visit Aleppo, any of the material in the earlier work can be used in the *Bughya*. If the subject of a biographical notice was, *inter alia*, a *muḥaddith*, the item or items will be headed by a *ḥadīth* or *ḥadīth*s. These are followed by an apparently *ad hoc* collection of anecdote and verse, or perhaps merely a narrative account of an incident or incidents involving the subject. Also included are documentary items, like an endorsement that Ibn al-ʿAdīm may discover on a manuscript, or the text of an inscription, seen by himself, or heard from someone else. The notice is usually concluded with the details and date of the subject's death.

The conventions of the biographical dictionary allow the *Bughya* to open a window on a wider world than merely Aleppo and northern Syria. References to travel by the subject of a notice abound in the biographical volumes. In the case of visitors to northern Syria, they are needed to justify inclusion in the dictionary. In the case of both outsiders and residents, itineraries are important because they corroborate the subsequent inclusion in the notice of the *ḥadīth* and/or belle-lettrist material, which the subject of the notice added to his own *florilegium* at the place in question. Nor is it only the travels of

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[1] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, Kamāl al-Dīn ʿUmar, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fi taʾrīkh Ḥalab* ed. S. Zakkar, 11 vols., (Damascus, 1988), iv, 1808–1811; also facsimile ed. F. Sezgin, 11 vols. (Frankfurt, 1986–1990). All refs. are to the Damascus edition.

[2] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, vii, 3453–3463.

the subject of the notice that are recorded. The movements of the compiler himself are also given, in order to vouch for the coincidence between compiler and source. Ibn al-ʿAdīm collected a lot of the data for his dictionary while abroad from his native city.

Most of the pretexts for travel advanced in the dictionary, whether in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's own time or before, fall under one of the following headings: the *ḥajj*; education, including the gathering of *ḥadīth*; commerce; migration; war (especially during the author's own lifetime, which saw wars with the Franks and the incursions of the Mongols); missions on behalf of rulers; patronage and employment; and the enmity of people in high places.

As far as the Ayyubid era is concerned, that is, the period of the author's own life, all the categories are represented. However, it is movement in the last three categories which concerns us here, in particular traffic between Egypt and Aleppo.

There are a number of references in the *Bughya* to diplomatic missions carried out between Egypt and Aleppo, including some made by Ibn al-ʿAdīm himself. The subjects of three notices were sent at various times from Egypt to the ruler of Aleppo by al-Kāmil (ruled 615–635/1218–1238). They were of different professions. Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥamawayh (died at Mosul 617/1220) was a *faqīh*;[3] al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Kātib al-Dībājī (died at Damascus 617/1220) was a *kātib al-inshāʾ*;[4] and Jamāl al-Dīn Ismāʿīl al-Mubārak al-Shayzarī (died at Ḥarrān, where he had been posted, in 626/1229) was a soldier.[5] Jamāl al-Dīn was also an assiduous Qurʾān reader: Ibn al-ʿAdīm tells us that, on another mission for al-Kāmil, this time to the Franks besieging Damietta in the course of the Fifth Crusade (615–6/1218–9), he completed a full reading of the book for every day of his mission.[6]

The notice in the *Bughya* of the celebrated *wazīr* and poet Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zuhayr al-Kātib al-Ṣaʿīdī (581–656/1186–1258) contains details of missions made by Bahāʾ al-Dīn on behalf of the next ruler of Egypt but one after al-Kāmil, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb, and the latter's son Tūrānshāh.[7] An early mission to the east for al-Ṣālih Ayyūb, when

[3] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, x, 4394–4396.
[4] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, v, 2288–2289.
[5] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 1804–1808.
[6] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 1808.
[7] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, ix, 3883–3886.

the latter was still heir apparent to al-Kāmil in Egypt, before being deposed in favour of al-ʿĀdil II, brought Bahāʾ al-Dīn to Aleppo. In 644/1246 he was sent by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb, now ruler of Egypt, to Aleppo in an attempt to extradite al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's most dangerous rival, who was under house arrest by the ruler of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. Meanwhile, in the entry for al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl, Ibn al-ʿAdīm tells us that he himself had been despatched in the opposite direction by al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, in an attempt to mollify al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb.[8] Once in Aleppo, Bahāʾ al-Dīn was treated well, but kept in Aleppo for three months. Was this perhaps to ensure the safe return of Ibn al-ʿAdīm himself?

Bahāʾ al-Dīn's mission from Tūrānshāh was to notify al-Nāṣir Yūsuf formally of the death of al-Ṣālih Ayyūb (in 647/1249),[9] by which time al-Nāṣir Yūsuf had added Damascus to his possessions.

Another work of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's, his chronicle of Aleppo, the *Zubdat al-ḥalab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab*, supplies more detail about the author's own diplomatic travels. The mission to Ayyūb that apparently crossed Bahāʾ al-Dīn's to al-Nāṣir Yūsuf was not Ibn al-ʿAdīm's first to Cairo, nor was it his first encounter with al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. He recounts in the *Zubda* how, in 637/1240, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf sent him to Cairo to congratulate al-Kāmil's immediate successor, al-ʿĀdil II, on his victory at Gaza over a force led by Count Henry of Bar, in the course of Count Theobald's Crusade (4 Rabīʿ II 637/13 November 1239). But events overtook the envoy, for he got to Cairo to find that al-ʿĀdil had been siezed by his military officers, and al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb installed in his place. So, instead of delivering an encomium, he found himself sent back to Aleppo with a warning for its ruler.[10]

Ibn al-ʿAdīm was again in Egypt, to be precise "at al-Kabsh, between Miṣr and al-Qāhira", when he learned of the death, which took place in 656/1258, of Bahāʾ al-Dīn. A friendship had been struck up between the two men in Damascus in the years immediately after the occupation in 648/1250 of the city by al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, who had taken the Egyptian *wazīr* into his service.[11] What Ibn al-ʿAdīm was doing in Egypt in 656/1258 is unclear. Presumably it

[8] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 1810.
[9] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 3882.
[10] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab* ed. S. Dahhān, 3 vols., (Damascus, 1951–68), iii, 247.
[11] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 3885.

was connected with the growing Mongol threat to Syria, which eventually forced him to flee to Egypt. It was there in 660/1262 that he died, and was buried, according to one report, in the mausoleum in the southern Qarāfa which al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's former *nā'ib* in Cairo and Damascus, Jamāl al-Dīn Mūsā b. Yaghmūr, had built for himself.[12] (Jamāl al-Dīn died three years later while returning to Egypt with Baybars after the sieges of Caesarea and Arsūf.)[13]

Princely patronage of poetic talent frequently appears in the *Bughya* as a reason for travel. The *majlis* of the ruler of Aleppo, al-Ẓāhir (ruled 582–613/1186–1215) seems to have hosted a number of poets. The notices have been preserved of what Ibn al-ʿAdīm terms al-Ẓāhir's favourite poet, Rājiḥ b. Ḥillī al-Sharaf (died 627/1230);[14] and of his next most admired, Sālim b. Saʿāda al-Ḥimṣī al-Muhadhdhab (died 618/1221), who came from Homs and "was given a purse together with the other poets in his service".[15] Ibn al-ʿAdīm himself was a poet, and a literary associate of al-Ẓāhir, to whom, on the birth of al-Ẓāhir's son and heir to Aleppo, al-ʿAzīz, he presented an anthology, which has been preserved.

Two poets from Egypt can be identified in this circle, although at what time or times they participated in it is unclear. One of them, al-Muʿtamad al-Qifṭī al-Miṣrī, died 618/1221), Ibn al-ʿAdīm meets in al-Ẓāhir's *majlis* while al-Qifṭī was in the ruler's employ.[16] A poet from Bilbays, Abū al-ʿAbbās Ibn Kasā' (died 634/1236), in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's words, "ranged the lands, praising the rulers and taking their blessing".[17] Among these rulers was apparently al-Ẓāhir. Ibn Kasā''s brother also came from Bilbays to Aleppo, although not as a poet. In a separate notice, where, uncharacteristically, he does not draw attention to the relationship, Ibn al-ʿAdīm records how Abū al-ʿAbbās' brother, Abū Sulaymān Ibn Kasā' al-Ṣūfī (died 639/1241) spent some years in Aleppo at the Madrasa al-Ṣāḥibiyya, which was founded by Saladin's retired *qāḍī al-ʿaskar* Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād,

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[12] Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalā' bi-ta'rīkh Ḥalab al-shahbā'* (Aleppo 1988), iv, 460.

[13] Abū Shāma Shihāb al-Dīn, *Tarājim al-qarnayn (Dhayl kitāb al-rawḍatayn)*, (Beirut 1984), 235.

[14] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, viii, 3539–3546.

[15] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, ix, 4105–4111.

[16] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, v, 2327.

[17] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, ii, 773.

before returning to Bilbays, where he underwrote the restoration of the town's mosque.[18]

It was not only Egyptian poets who sought employment with al-Ẓāhir in Aleppo. A descendant of the Aghlabids, al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Jabbāb, "member of a house," as Ibn al-ʿAdīm puts it, "of wealth, political leadership, prominence, art, learning, and the hearing and transmission of *ḥadīth*" went to Aleppo from Egypt to serve al-Ẓāhir in 596/1199, in what capacity is unclear. He moved on to the courts of al-Afḍal in Sumaysāt and al-Ashraf in Ḥarrān before returning to Egypt. Ibn al-ʿAdīm says that al-Kāmil sent him on a mission to the *bilād Ismāʿīliyya*, by which he presumably means the Syrian Assassins. He gives no further details. Ibn al-Jabbāb died in 623/1226.[19]

The usefulness to Aleppo of the Fatimid administrative tradition of Egypt seems to have been recognized early on by the Ayyubid rulers of the city. Al-Ḥasan b. Ismāʿīl Abū ʿAlī al-Qāḍī al-Muʾtaman (where al-Qāḍī may be an honorific title) was a *kātib* in the last days of the Fatimid dynasty. He was attached by Saladin as *kātib* to the establishment of his son al-Ẓāhir in Aleppo, where he died in 588/1192, in the home, Ibn al-ʿAdīm notes, of one of his own *shaykhs*, the celebrated al-Kindī.[20]

Flight from the enmity of rulers and those in high places is sometimes forced upon people whose notices appear in the *Bughya*. As well as being a factual and, if the circumstances permit it, a literary presentation of a life, an entry is to be read as a cautionary tale. Royal or vizieral disfavour is a stock element of the biographical notice *qua* exemplar. The hostility of the ruler or his *wazīr* is as much a judgement on the person incurring it as it is on the person showing it. People are rarely victims of blind fate. Talent, wealth and power, one or more of which the subject of a notice has enjoyed, have made him vain and oblivious to the envy that his good fortune has excited. The ideal life is that of the quiet and unobtrusive *shaykh*. (It also, one should say, makes for the blandest sort of notice.)

A figure in Egypt from whom more than one biographee has to flee is Ṣāfī al-Dīn b. Shukr (548–622/1154–1225), *wazīr* of al-ʿĀdil I,

[18] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, vii, 3444–3445.
[19] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, vi, 2756–2759.
[20] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, v, 2302–2303.

and then, after an interlude when—poetic justice—he himself was out of favour, of al-Kāmil.

The *Bughya* tells of at least three people who, falling foul of Ibn Shukr, flee to al-Ẓāhir's establishment in Aleppo. All three are administrative figures. Al Ashraf al-Qāḍī al-Ajall al-Miṣrī al-Makhzūmī (died 615/1219) was in charge of the *dīwān* in the days of Saladin, and also, at one time, of the *dīwān al-aḥbās*, the office responsible for administering religious bequests. In 602/1206 he sought refuge from Ibn Shukr with al-Ẓāhir in Aleppo. Al-Ẓāhir received him well, and gave him a position in the administration. Ibn al-ʿAdīm says that Ibn Shukr wanted to see the old families brought low. Later, there was a rapprochement between the two men, and al-Ashraf returned to Cairo. Ibn al-ʿAdīm relates how al-Ashraf took ill and died while he was talking to his erstwhile enemy. Ibn Shukr quickly took steps to avert from himself suspicion of having poisoned al-Ashraf.[21] In the case of another person, however, the suspicion persisted. The son of the previously mentioned envoy of al-Kāmil's, al-Dībājī, suspected Ibn Shukr of having sent someone to Damascus to poison his father, because he was jealous of al-Kāmil's trust in al-Dībājī.[22]

A year after al-Ashraf's flight, in 603/1206, "for some reason", Ibn al-ʿAdīm goes no further, Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-ʿAlam b. Abī al-Ḥajjāj fell out with Ibn Shukr and went to al-Ẓāhir in Aleppo. He had been appointed *ʿāriḍ* of Saladin's army, and apparently remained in the post through the rule of al-ʿAzīz ʿUthmān and into that of al-ʿĀdil I. Al-Ẓāhir, we are told, saw to the wants of a man "skilled in the practice of administration".[23] He was followed in 604/1207 by a *kātib*, Ibn Mammāṭī, the author of an administrative digest entitled *Kītāb qawānīn al-dawāwīn*. Ibn Mammāṭī "feared Ibn Shukr and separated himself from Egypt".[24]

By receiving fugitives such as these, al-Ẓāhir was furthering two objectives which might be said to characterize his rule in northern Syria: independence of the other Ayyubid entities, especially Egypt, which giving asylum to Cairo's disaffected would underline; and the material advancement of the Aleppine princedom, evinced in his

[21] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, vi 2951.
[22] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, v 2289.
[23] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, v, 1670–1672.
[24] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 1561–1562.

refurbishment programme, for example, to which their administrative talents would contribute.

One might note that the *Bughya* also offers evidence of Egypt receiving victims of disfavour. Thus Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm Zayn Ibn Qurnāṣ al-Ḥamawī, member of a leading family of the city (Ḥamā being in the dictionary's catchment area), fled sometime after 617/1220 from the ruler of Ḥamā, Qilij Arslān to Cairo, Here he sought help from al-Kāmil in having his property restored to him, which al-Kāmil effected in 626/1229, when he replaced Qilij Arslān with the latter's brother, al-Muẓaffar. (It availed Ibn Qurnāṣ little, however: after the death of al-Kāmil in 635/1238, Ibn Qurnāṣ was seized, and died in prison.)[25] A connection with the same family forced another native of Ḥamā to flee to Egypt. The daughter of Abū al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-ʿImād (died 652/1254), erstwhile *qāḍī* of Ḥamā, was married to al-Mukhliṣ Ibrāhīm b. Qurnāṣ, the *wazīr* of al-Ashraf Mūsā b. Ibrāhīm. Al-ʿImād had been sent by al-Ashraf to al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb in Egypt, probably to seek assistance against the forces of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf of Aleppo. For some reason, while al-ʿImād was in Egypt, al-Ashraf turned against his *wazīr* so his son-in-law remained in Egypt, where al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb gave him the *qaḍā'* of the city of Miṣr.[26]

There is little sense in these references to Egypt, of any "otherness", or even of regional characteristics within a greater Islamic whole, at least in the case of the Egypt of Ibn al-ʿAdīm's time. One supposes this to be due partly to a deliberate policy on the part of the compiler, and partly to the situation that actually obtained. The *Bughya* is intended to laud the *faḍā'il* of Aleppo as a leading city of the Islamic world. In Ibn al-ʿAdīm's time the unity of that world was threatened from without as never before. Differences within it had, therefore, to be papered over. For this reason, it is only by means of marginal comments that Ibn al-ʿAdīm concedes that large areas of the catchment area defined in the topographical introduction, while they were once Muslim territory, are now in the hands of the Armenians or the Franks. At the same time, it is clear that some of the institutions around which the lives of many of the sub-

[25] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, iv, 1609–1612.
[26] Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughya*, x, 4581–4582.

jects of the notices revolve—in particular *taḥdīth* and the curriculum of the *madrasa*—were supra-regional. Accordingly, within such orbits, regional differences counted for little: a life lived in Cairo by this light differed little from a life lived by the same light in Aleppo or Damascus.

AL-NUWAYRĪ AS A HISTORIAN OF THE MONGOLS[1]

Reuven Amitai

The importance of the work of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (died 733/1333) for the study of the central lands of the medieval Islamic lands has long been apparent to scholars. His encyclopedia *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* has special significance for the history of early Mamluk Egypt and Syria, where he lived and worked as an administrator of fairly high status. It also constitutes a source of some importance for the history of the pre-Mamluk period in these two countries, as well as that of the neighboring lands, particularly to the east. In this paper, I wish to delve into al-Nuwayrī's treatment of one particular neighbor, the Mongols, who first entered the Islamic world in 1219 with Chinggis Khan, and then in the 1250s under his grandson Hülegü set up the Ilkhanid state. From 1260 to about 1320 the Ilkhanate fought the Mamluks across the Euphrates River and the foothills of the Taurus mountains in northern Syria, subsequently—until its disintegration in 1335, maintaining friendly relations with them. The impact of the Mongols on the *mashriq* was enormous, and in many ways it was substantial even on Syria and Egypt. It comes as no surprise, then, that al-Nuwayrī saw fit to devote a separate and large section to them.

Al-Nuwayrī and his work have been the subject of much study by scholars of Mamluk historiography.[2] Most of this discussion has centred on the last and longest of the five *funūn* ("categories") into which the work is divided, the *fann* devoted to history. Many important conclusions have already been drawn on the nature of the last *fann*, as to al-Nuwayrī's use of sources, the utilisation of his work by

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[1] I would like to thank my colleague Dr. Meir Bar-Asher for reading a draft of this paper and making several useful comments.

[2] See the bibiography of studies in M. Chapoutot-Remadi's article on the historian in *EI2*. The edition of *Nihāyat al-arab* began appearing in Cairo in 1346/1923 and by 1412/1992 had reached vol. 31, including events up to the year 700/1300–1. As far as I know, the volumes containing the annals up to 731/1330–1 have yet to appear. In the present paper, most of the references to this work refer to vol. 27. edited by Saʿīd ʿĀshūr.

other writers, his insertion of autobiographical details, and perhaps most notable of all, "the originality of the method adopted" by him.[3] This refers to al-Nuwayrī's flexible use of the annalistic structure, "in order give more coherence to his narrative."[4] The entire historical section is divided into dynastic narratives, which are then arranged more-or-less chronologically, and into which dates are frequently inserted. The treatment within each dynasty is basically topical, and al-Nuwayrī reserves for himself the right to see a topic through to a logical conclusion, before returning to the mainstream of the narrative. He has, then, succeeded in breaking out of the rigid mould of the annalistic genre common to his time. The inspiration of al-Nuwayrī's method cannot concern us here, but it can be mentioned that he appears to be unique for his generation and in this, at least, it may be suggested that he greatly resembles—for better or worse—historians of our day.

It is not surprising that almost all the discussion of al-Nuwayrī's historical method has been focused on the final section of this fifth *fann*, which tells the history of the Mamluk Sultanate, called by the usual contemporary title of *dawlat al-turk*.[5] After all, almost invariably the scholars investigating al-Nuwayrī the historian were themselves historians of the Mamluk period, and their interest would clearly be that section relating to it. One of the other sections which has yet to receive adequate attention, and not only by students of Mamluk historiography, is the one devoted to the history of the Mongols, *al-dawla al-jinkizkhāniyya* ("the dynasty of Chinggis Khan") as al-Nuwayrī refers to it, which is contained on about 120 pages in volume 27 of the printed edition. It is given some attention by M. Chapoutat-Remadi's article in the article on al-Nuwayrī in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, and was consulted by D.P. Little in his *Introduction to Mamluk Historiography*.[6] Elsewhere, as far as I know, it has been little used, and certainly not been the subject of a comprehensive study. However, students of Mamluk historiography are

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[3] Chapoutot-Remadi, 159, citing D.P. Little, *Introduction to Mamluk Historiography* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 31 and *idem*, "The Historical and Historiographical significance of the Detention of Ibn Taimiyya", *IJMES*, 4 (1973), 315; see also S.M. Elham, *Kitbuga und Lagin, Studien zur Mamlukengeschichte nach Baybars al-Manṣūrī und Nuwairī* (Freiburg, 1977), 31.

[4] Chapoutat-Remadi, 159.

[5] This begins on al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 414.

[6] Little, *Introduction*, 24–8.

in good company. This "mini-monograph" on the Mongols has remained *terra incognita* for virtually all scholars of the Mongol Empire in general, and the Mongols in Iran in particular.[7]

It is the first aim of this paper to bring this particular source to a wider audience, both Mamlukist and Mongolist alike. I will attempt two more goals. The first is to analyze al-Nuwayrī's method of presentation here. Secondly, I will try to rate the value of the information contained therein. To achieve these goals, I will look at six discrete episodes and compare them with the evidence known from other sources, both Mamluk and pro-Mongol. These "case studies" are as follows: the rise of Chinggis Khan; Mongol defeats at the hands of Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazm Shāh in 1221; the origins of the conflict between the Ilkhans and the Khans of the Golden Horde; events in Syria in 1260 which culminated in the battle of ʿAyn Jālūt; the short reign of Tegüder (Aḥmad) Ilkhan (1282–84); and finally, the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1295 and the subsequent period of his rule.

Before commencing this discussion, I would like to digress briefly to mention what is a growing and healthy trend among historians of the Mongols, particularly of the Ilkhanate. This is the use of Arabic sources of Mamluk provenance.[8] Seeds of this practice may be seen in Quatremère's notes to his partial edition and translation of Rashīd al-Dīn's great historical work,[9] Tiesenhausen's corpus of Arabic, i.e. Mamluk, sources on the Golden Horde,[10] and Spuler's mid-20th century monographs on the Mongols in Iran and Russia.[11] On the whole, however, it seems that historians of the Ilkhanate have kept to their Persian sources, with an occasional Armenian or Syriac writer thrown in.[12] The Mamlukists, on the other hand, certainly had enough on

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[7] The word Iran here does not refer only to the regions covered by the modern sate of Iran, but rather to the much larger territories ruled by the Ilkhanids, including modern Iraq Turkmenistan, trans-Euphrates Syria, Azerbaijan, as well as much of the Caususus, Turkey and Afghanistan.

[8] In this connection, I would especially like to mention the work of Dr. Charles Melville of Cambridge.

[9] *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*, ed. and tr. M.E. Quatremère (Paris, 1836).

[10] W. de Tiesenhausen, *Recueil de matériaux relatifs à l'histoire de l'Horde d'Or* [= V. Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov, otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy*], vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1884).

[11] *Die Mongolen in Iran: Verwaltung and Kurtur der Ilchanzeit. 1220–1350* (4th edition, Leiden, 1985); *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Rusland* (2nd edition, Wiesbaden, 1965).

[12] It should be noted, however, that a few Mamluk sources are mentioned in

their plate without trying to do something with the not infrequent passages regarding the Mongols in their sources. A perceptible change was heralded by two important publications from about a generation ago. One of these was the series of articles by the late David Ayalon on the Mongol Yasa, the body of law attributed to Chinggis Khan, which appeared between 1971–73 and had important implications for our understanding of both Mamluk and Mongol history.[13] The other event, perhaps more appreciated by the Mongolists than the Mamlukists, was the exemplary edition, translation and annotation by the late Klaus Lech of the section on the Mongols in Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī's *Masālik al-abṣār*.[14]

I will begin with the rise of Chinggis Khan. As already noted by Chapoutot-Remadi, al-Nuwayrī starts this section by stating his aims and sources:

> We shall give a summarized account of [Chinggis Khan's] story and the beginning of his appearance, and what were his circumstances until he conquered the country. We shall explain this by means of what we have gained from our reading and we shall bring from what we gathered and have heard from oral testimony. As this kingdom was extensive and remote, and [although] among historians it was the goal of persistant search, it has been difficult to exactly understand its conditions, to peer into them, to grasp its history (*akhbārahā*), and to examine its remnants. It is neither possible to disregard this dynasty, for it has become famous, nor to conceal its history, for it has become well known. We have [therefore] brought forth from the history of the [dynasty's] kings, a small bit without direction and a fragment without order, from what al-Munshī [al-Nasawī] in his history of Jalāl [al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh] and ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī in his history *al-Kamil [fi'l-ta'rīkh]* have transmitted [to us]. If there are other historians who have written about [the Mongols], what they have written has not come down to us, nor what they have recorded of their history. We have [further] transmitted [material] that we have which [al-Nasawī and Ibn al-Athīr's] histories did not contain, and what was

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Chapter 1 ("Die Quellen") in M. Weiers (ed.), *Die Mongolen: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur* (Darmstadt, 1986), 22–3.

[13] D. Ayalon, "The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān. A Reexamination," *Studia Islamica*, pt. A, 33 (1971), 97–140; pt. B, 34 (1971), 151–80; pt. C1, 36 (1972), 113–58; pt. C2, 38 (1973): 107–56 [Rpt. in D. Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (London, 1988).

[14] K. Lech (ed. and tr.), *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-ʿUmarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* ("Asiatische Forschungen," vol. 14) (Wiesbaden, 1968).

> after them, which was transmitted to us by their envoys who arrived at our rulers' court from their direction, and others who came from their land . . .[15]

On the basis of this testimony, we can already see one of the fundamental differences between al-Nuwayrī and al-ʿUmarī. It appears that for the early history of the Mongol empire, the former primarily derived his material from two prominent Arabic writers, contemporaries of the events described, and therefore active some one hundred years before he himself sat down to write his encyclopedia. Al-ʿUmarī on the other hand, based himself, at least for this parallel discussion, on named oral sources (merchants and bureaucrats who left the Ilkhanate for the Mamluk Sultanate)[16] as well Juwayni's Persian *History of the World Conqueror* (*Ta'rīkh-i jahān-gushā*).[17]

I have compared the section of the rise of Chinggis Khan and his invasion of Iran from 1219–23, some 34 printed pages, with the works of al-Nasawī[18] and Ibn al-Athīr,[19] and almost invariably it is indeed a rendering, usually somewhat abbreviated, of the relevant passages in these works. To al-Nuwayrī's credit, he paraphrases carefully and rearranges the material in a logical manner, creating a narrative from his two sources which is reasonable and compelling. I might add that al-Nuwayrī himself has made this comparison relatively easy for the modern scholar, since he generally cites his sources by name as he goes along.

As far as I can tell, al-Nuwayrī makes only two significant additions to these two sources in this section. The first is a description of Chinggis Khan's origins and rise to greatness and the second deals with his death. Only the former will be dealt with here. It is an interesting, albeit apocryphal, passage, dealing with Chinggis Khan's early history, which I here summarize): Early on in his life, Chinggis Khan asks a Jew about the exalted position and fame of Moses,

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[15] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 300; cf. translation in Chapoutot-Remadi, "al-Nuwayrī," 159.

[16] See Lech's introduction to his edition of al-ʿUmarī, 17–41, especially 29–38.

[17] Lech, *al-ʿUmarī*, 22–3; Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. A, 116–25.

[18] Muḥammad al-Munshī al-Nasawī, *Sīrat suṭān jalāl al-dīn mankūbirtī* [= *Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*], ed. and tr. O. Houdas (Paris, 1891–5). For the matter of the spelling and pronunciation of this ruler's personal name, see J.A. Boyle, "Djalāl al-Dīn Khʷārazm-Shāh," *EI2*, 2:392.

[19] ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh* (Beirut, 1385–6/1965–6).

Jesus and Muḥammad. The Jew replies that this was because they isolated themselves and devoted themselves to God. He adds that according to the Jewish books (refering, at least, to the Bible), Chinggis Khan is destined to head a victorious dynasty. Thus Chinggis Khan is inspired to become an ascetic. Leaving his family, he isolated himself in the mountains and ate permissible things (*mubāhāt*, referring to foods permited by Islam). His fame spread, and people of his tribe came to visit him. These take part in a chanting, clapping and dancing ritual, with Chinggis Khan—who is called here a *bakhshī*[20]—in the middle. This according to al-Nuwayrī is how Chinggis Khan and the Mongols got their start.[21]

It is beyond the limits of the present paper to analyze in depth with this important passage, but I will briefly mention that it appears to reflect several motifs in early Mongolian imperial history and culture. Firstly, there is an expression of the equanimity with which the Mongols showed to different religions, what some scholars have called "religious tolerance."[22] Secondly, the fact that a Jew is singled out to give Chinggis Khan instruction and to predict his glorious future is worthy of comment. We may have here an echo of Muslim claims that the Jews had in their bible passages referring to the appearance of the prophet Muḥammad.[23] Perhaps a Jew was singled out to be a harbinger of Chinggis Khan's heavenly mandated greatness, since he was member of the oldest monothiestic community. Thirdly, there is a description of what appears to be some type of shamanistic ritual, with the young Chinggis Khan as its focus. It is known that Chinggis Khan himself had acted in a shamanist capacity early in his career, although apparently not in such a demonstrative capacity as described in this passage.[24] Fourthly, we have here an echo of the heavenly mandate to rule the world which Chinggis Khan

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[20] In the text: *y-kh-sh-y*. On *bakhshī*, see G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), 321; P. Jackson, "Baḫšī," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 3:535–6, who points out that this is a relatively late term.

[21] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarab*, 27, 302.

[22] On this matter, see: ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juwaynī, *Taʾrīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M.M. Qazwīnī (London and Leiden, 1912–37), 1:18–9 [= *The History of the World Conqueror*, tr. J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), 1:26]; al-ʿUmarī, ed. Lech, 7 (of Arabic text); D. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986), 40–1.

[23] See H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, 1992), 75–110.

[24] P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, tr. T.N. Haining (Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1991), 55.

and his descendants claimed.[25] Finally, we might see here a hint of the eventual Islamization of the Mongols, at least those in the west. In short, here the basic Mongol imperial view is seen here to fit in some way with that of Islam, a sort of Chinggisid hanifism.[26] Al-Nuwayrī's direct source is unknown as is the passage's ultimate provenance. It would appear, though, that the story as it here appears of relatively late origins, i.e. it was in circulation some time after Chinggis Khan's lifetime, since it alludes—as mentioned above—to the Mongols' conversion to Islam. The use of the term *bakhshī* also suggests a late origin, since this term is only used by late pro-Mongol sources. It may be noted that this story, like some others in Arabic about the rise of Chinggis Khan and the early history of the Mongols,[27] differs somewhat from the accounts in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and the pro-Mongol histories in Persian.[28] This discrepancy, beyond the scope of this paper, is worthy of further study.

From Chinngis Khan's rise to power, al-Nuwayrī provides a succinct but clear description of his invasion of the territory ruled by the Khwārazm Shāh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, at first summarizing from al-Nasawī's work. One interesting passage which is left out is the exchange of letters between Chinggis Khan and the Khwārazm Shāh, in which the formers refers to the latter as "my son."[29] After several pages, al-Nuwayrī switches to Ibn al-Athīr, but only mentions him by name further along.[30] Most of the ensuing narrative

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[25] On this matter, see: Morgan, *Mongols*, 14; J.M. Smith, Jr., "The Mongols and World Conquest," *Mongolica*, 5 (26), 206–14; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 9–11, where several other relevant studies are mentioned.

[26] On the assimilation of Inner Asian motifs into the Islam practiced by people of Inner Asian nomadic origin, see D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, 1994); R. Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamluk Sultanate," *BSOAS*, 59 (1996), 1–10.

[27] See U. Haarmann, "Alṭun Hān und Cingiz Hān bie den ägyptischen Mamluken," *Der Islam*, 51 (1974), 1–36; *idem*, "Turkish Legends in the Popular Historiography of Medieval Egypt," in *Proceedings of the VIth Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies* (Stockholm and Leiden, 1972), 97–107; R. Irwin, "What the Partridge Told the Eagle: A Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols," in R. Amitai-Preiss and D. Morgan, *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999).

[28] For a narrative based on these last mentioned sources, see Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, *passim*.

[29] al-Nasawī, 32–4.

[30] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarab*, xxvii, 308 (= Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, xxii,365); Ibn

follows this latter writer, although on occasion al-Nuwayri inserts some information from al-Nasawī.[31] In only one instance does al-Nuwayrī explicitly compare the evidence from his two main sources for the rendition of Chinggis Khan's life, with regard to a Mongol defeat at Ghazna followed by that at Parwān in 1221 at the hands of Jalāl al-Dīn b. Khwārazm Shāh.[32] For the former, the al-Nuwayrī gives Ibn al-Athīr's account, and then al-Nasawī's, mentioning the main difference between them. For the second defeat, al-Nuwayrī writes:

> When the Mongols were defeated [near Ghazna], Jalāl al-Dīn sent an envoy to Chinggis Khan telling him that whatever place he chose for a battle he would come there. Chinggis Khan sent a large army with his [third] son Toloi Khan, and it arrived at Kābul. Jalāl al-Dīn set out with the Muslim armies, and [the two forces] met there and fought a pitched battle. The Mongol army was defeated, and Toloi Khan b. Chinggis Khan was killed. The Muslims looted what [the Mongols had] with them, and liberated those prisoners in their hands. Ibn al-Athīr did not mention the killing of Toloi Khan, but al-Munshī [al-Nasawī] mentioned it, and he is correct.[33]

Actually al-Nasawī was wrong in this matter, at least if we follow both the main Persian sources[34] and the *Secret History of the Mongols*.[35] Toloi was not sent with this force, but rather it was under the command of Shigi-qutuqu, Chinggis Khan's adopted son, who was not killed in this reverse.[36] It may be that the inspiration for this pre-

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al-Athīr is first mentioned by name in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 27, 312 (= Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12, 372).

[31] In a note on al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 310, the editor points out that a sentence is taken from Nasawī, 36. In al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 311–2, the names of the Mongol commanders Jebe (called here Jeme) and Subetei are inserted from Nasawī, 44. The bottom of al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xvii, 327 seems to be a summary of al-Nasawī, 81.

[32] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 227–8. For these episodes, see J.A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1968), 318–9.

[33] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xvii, 328. Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, xii, 396; al-Nasawī, 81.

[34] Juwaynī, *Ta'rīkh*, ed. Qazwīnī, iii, 4 (= tr. Boyle, 2:549); Rashīd al-Dīn, in E. Blochet, *Djami el-Tévarikh* (Leiden and London, 1911), 2:23–4, 220–1 (= J.A. Boyle [tr.], *The Successors of Genghis Khan* [London and New York, 1971], 38–9, 167–8. The editor of al-Nuwayrī mentions al-Nasawī's mistake, citing the Arabic translation of Rashīd al-Dīn.

[35] F.W. Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 211–4 (par. 272).

[36] Ratchnevsky, 113; Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History," 317–19.

mature story of Toloi's demise may be the death of Chinggis Khan's favorite grandson, a son of Chaghatai, just previous to this event.[37] Be this as it may, Nuwayrī's efforts to compare and rate historical evidence can be noted with appreciation.

Subsequent events from the Mongol campaign in Iran continue to be derived from the records of Ibn al-Athīr and al-Nasawī, as clearly stated by al-Nuwayrī himself.[38] This is followed by the story of Chinggis Khan's death (1227), and then the account of Ögödei's accession and rule (1229–41).[39] The provenance of this passage is not stated by al-Nuwayrī, and has yet to be ascertained. Al-Nuwayrī explicitly cites Ibn al-Athīr in describing the Mongol campaigns from 628/1330–1 in Azerbeijan which led to Jalāl al-Dīn's demise and death,[40] and then concludes this section with the following:

> This is the end of what Ibn al-Athīr and al-Munshī [al-Nasawī] have recounted in their histories regarding the Mongols. They did not go further than the year 628 (1230–1). Some of what we have related was not recounted by them, as in [the story] of Chinggis Khan's death, and the accession of his son. [This account] was not derived from them, and God knows best.[41]

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Al-Nuwayrī's account of origins of the conflict between the Khans of the so-called Golden Horde and the Ilkhans, i.e. the Mongols southern Russia and Iran respectively, contains an unusual report for which he is the earliest extant source. This report, however, is also found in the history of al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), *'Iqd al-jumān*,[42] which may provide a clue to its ultimate provenance. The entire account is found in the rendition of the dynastic history of the Golden Horde's rulers, the descendants of Chinggis Khan's first son, Jochi. Berke, wrongly called here the son of Batu (the son of Jochi), when

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[37] Juwaynī, *Ta'rīkh*, tr. Boyle, 1:132 and note.
[38] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 329–33.
[39] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 332–41.
[40] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 342–5.
[41] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 345.
[42] Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-jumān fi ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān*, vol. 1, ed. M.M. Amīn (Cairo, 1307/1987), 89–90, 108; these passages are also found in Tiesenhausen, *Recueil*, 477–9.

he was really his brother, ascends the throne of the Golden Horde after a struggle with Sartaq. Al-Nuwayrī has the latter as Berke's uncle, when actually he was Batu's son, i.e. Berke's nephew. The stage is now set for some further dynastic and chronological confusion.

After Sartaq's death, mistakenly put in 652/1254–5, three years earlier than recorded by other sources,[43] al-Nuwayrī informs us how a Mongol royal lady in the Golden Horde, Baraqshin, wife of Tughan, another of son of Batu, wanted her son Tudan Möngke to be khan. In spite of her influence, the various princes and division (*tümen*) commanders thought otherwise, and elected Berke. Seeing that her aims had been thwarted, she sent to Hülegü, calling on him to take control of the country. The princess herself set off to meet Hülegü, but was caught, brought back and put to death.[44]

However, in 653/1255–6, Hülegü, having been egged on by Baraqshin, embarks on a war with Berke.[45] Note should be made that this is about eight years before the date which any other source, Mamluk or pro-Mongol, gives for the outbreak of this conflict, and in fact is several years before Hülegü even arrives in western Iran;[46] mention can be made that Berke himself only became khan in 655/1257. In addition, all other sources are unanimous in attributing the initiation of the war to Berke. This being said, in its broad outlines, al-Nuwayrī's account resembles other Mamluk sources for the actual conduct of the war, with Hülegü's forces eventually being driven across the Terek River to the south, with many of them drowning in the process.[47] What it interesting about al-Nuwayrī's account, is that it introduces a new element, although perhaps trivial, into the study of the origins of this intra-Mongolian conflict. There is no mention of the usual litany of reasons given for the outbreak of the conflict: the struggle over revenues, territory and prestige, let alone the anger of Berke, a relatively recent convert to Islam,

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[43] Al-Nuwayrī also writes mistakenly writes that Batu died in 650, while is accepted that this was in 654/1256; C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties* (Edinburgh, 1996), 252.

[44] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 357–8.

[45] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 359.

[46] P. Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *CAJ*, 22 (1978), 233–4 and n. 210.

[47] Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 79–80.

at Hülegü's execution of the Caliph.[48] Rather, blame is placed on Hülegü, who had let himself be goaded on by a dissatisfied princess. Perhaps, indeed, internal rivalries among the Jochids of the north did indeed contribute to Hülegü's attempts to interfere in his cousins' affairs.

Al-Nuwayrī's treatment of the history of the Golden Horde is fairly extensive, about 20 pages. It appears that at least the later parts of this section are taken directly from the *Zubdat al-fikra* by his slightly earlier contemporary Baybars al-Manṣūrī, as is seen by comparing al-Nuwayrī's account of the war between Toqta and Noghai in passages from Baybars al-Manṣūrī edited by Tiesenhausen.[49] It is probable that the above discussed passage, dealing with the origins of the Ilkhanid-Golden Horde war, were also taken from Baybars al-Manṣūrī's chronicle, albeit from a lost section. This suggestion is strengthened by the existence of this passage on Baraqshin in al-ʿAynī's *ʿIqd al-jumān*, as has already been mentioned. Much of al-ʿAynī's material for the mid-13th century and later, including much information on the Golden Horde, is taken from Baybars al-Manṣūrī.[50] It is also worth noting that several modern scholars have drawn attention to al-Nuwayrī's frequent borrowings from Baybars al-Manṣūrī's chronicle, based on their studies on his final section on the Mamluk Sultanate.[51]

Al-Nuwayrī's continued use of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's chronicle as a model is seen in the next chapters, on Hülegü and his descendants. This is first reaffirmed by a detailed comparison of the parallel passages for the events of 1260, the year in which Hülegü invaded Syria and then withdrew, leaving Kitbugha as governor with

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[48] For these, see Jackson, "Dissolution," 208–35; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 78–79.

[49] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 368–75 (this passage is found in Tiesenhausen, 137–40); Baybars al-Manṣūrī, in Tiesenhausen, 87–92. I might add that the soon to be published edition of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *Zubdat al-fikra*, prepared by D.S. Richards, is awaited in anticipation by scholars of the Mamluk Sultanate.

[50] For example, al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd* (i, 91) cites Baybars by name in the passage which follows close on to the one just mentioned, in which Berke Khan's conversion to Islam is discussed (for more instances, see al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, i, 19, 31, 65, etc.).

[51] D.P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography* (Wiesbaden, 1970), 24–32; U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Frieburg, 1970), 104; Chapoutot-Remadi, "Al-Nuwayrī," 159; cf. Elham, *Kitbuga und Lagin*, 38, who makes the suggestion that Baybars was the source for all of al-Nuwayrī's section of the Mongols, for which no evidence is adduced.

a relatively small force that was subsequently defeated by the Mamluks at ʿAyn Jālūt. This comparison shows that al-Nuwayrī's account represents a detailed paraphrase of that found in Baybars's work. At times the passages are virtually identical. For example, both sources state that Kitbugha had been dispatched south from Aleppo to occupy Damascus with 12,000 horsemen, a unique number in Mamluk and Mongol sources, and not an improbable one at that.[52] Al-Nuwayrī, however, makes one important addition: he adds that Hülegü, having received faulty intelligence about the Mamluk army in Egypt, was content to leave Kitbugha with this force, and withdrew from Syria without adding to it. In other words, al-Nuwayrī's explicitly tells us what was the maximum number of Mongol soldiers with whom Kitbugha went to battle against the Mamluks at ʿAyn Jālūt, i.e. 12,000. Other sources, Mamluk and otherwise, also provide us with numbers, somewhat different, but it is unclear if this is a general description for the size of Kitbugha's force earlier in the year or at the actual battle itself. Al-Nuwayrī, then, supplies a detail of some importance for the study of this significant battle.

The fifth example to be presented is the account of the short reign of Tegüder Ilkhan, who ruled from 1282–4.[53] Being a Muslim, Tegüder took the additional name of Aḥmad upon his accession to the throne. Most of al-Nuwayrī's report is found in other Mamluk histories, not only Baybars al-Manṣūrī's. The exact lines of borrowing and common sources, however, have not yet been worked out.[54] Yet even in this generic Mamluk treatment of Tegüder's reign and his subsequent fall, al-Nuwayrī provides us with information not found elsewhere. This is a list of reasons why this Ilkhan had alienated the Mongols, or rather the Mongol élite, during his brief term in office, as follows:

1) He had behaved improperly towards the senior Mongols.
2) He forced them to convert to Islam.

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[52] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 390; Baybars, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, MS. British Library Add. 23325, fol. 37b. The entire description of the events leading up to the battle and the fighting itself is found in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 386–91; Baybars, *Zubdat*, fol. 36b–39b.

[53] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarab*, xxvii, 401–4.

[54] Tegūder's conversion and the subsequent problems he encountered as Ilkhan are the subject of my forthcoming study: "The Conversion of the Ilkhan Tegüder Aḥmad to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* ("Ayalon Memorial Volume").

3) He arrested and executed his brother Qunqurtai.
4) He inclined towards "the sons of the Mongols" (*ilā abnā' al-mughul*) and secluded himself with them, something which had never been encountered before.[55]

This evidence, without a doubt, must be part of any discussion on Tegūder's reign, although I might add that all of its components are not necessarily of equal credibility. On the whole, however, they do strengthen my feeling that the fact that Tegüder conversion to Islam did indeed contribute to the relative shortness of his rule, a conclusion not shared by all historians of the Ilkhanate.[56]

A final example, however, will show the limits to the value of al-Nuwayrī's text. In his description of the rise of Ghazan and his subsequent reign (1295–1304),[57] al-Nuwayrī does not inform us that this personality converted to Islam during the struggle with his cousin Baidu for the throne. In fact, al-Nuwayrī only touches upon the subject of Ghazan's religion in a matter of fact manner when he summarizes his proclamation in 1300, during the Ilkhan's brief occupation of Damascus, and there it only says the he "made public therein the signs of Islam and the [distinguishing] characteristics of the *sunna*."[58] Yet, perhaps this lacuna may be of use, possibly indicating the nonchalance with which Egyptian and Syrian contemporaries learnt of Ghazan's conversion, or a deliberate attempt to play down this change, even reflecting doubts as to its sincerity.[59]

Again, it is clear that large chunks, if not the majority of this section has been taken *en masse* from Baybars al-Manṣūrī.[60] That being said, al-Nuwayrī does insert his own observations, mentioning his presence at the battle of Marj al-Ṣuffar south of Damascus in 1303, in which the Mongols were severely trounced by the Mamluks.[61] In the "Mamluk" section of the book, it appears that the author provides us with a further recollection of the events.[62]

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[55] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 403.
[56] See, e.g., Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History," 367–8; P. Jackson, s.v. "Aḥmad Takūdār," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
[57] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 407–16.
[58] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 413.
[59] See T. Raff, *An Anti-Mongol Fatwa of Ibn Taimiya* (Leiden, 1973), esp. 33–5; Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition," 9–10.
[60] See, e.g., the account of the Mongol raids in Palestine in 1300: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 413; Baybars, fols. 217a–218a. The latter account is fuller and contains personal information.
[61] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, xxvii, 416.
[62] Chapoutot-Remadi, "al-Nuwayrī," 156, mentions this information, but I have

I would like to conclude this short presentation with two brief discussions, on what can be learnt from it on al-Nuwayrī as an historian, and what value does this Mongol section have for historian of the Mongols. As to the first matter, it has been seen that many, and perhaps most, of al-Nuwayrī's sources in this section have been identified. Al-Nuwayrī's extensive use of previous histories, some of it—particularly Baybars al-Manṣūrī's chronicle—being quite contemporary to him, is of course typical of the historical writing of the Mamluk period, and need not amaze us. What is perhaps more unusual is that he has extracted these passages from purely annalistic chronicles, not to put in his account of the Mamluk Sultanate, but rather into a separate section. This reflects al-Nuwayrī's analytical and organizational abilities, demonstrating that he was able to break up information into discreet blocks, employing them as he saw fit. Furthermore, by combining blocks of information from two or more sources, he succeeded in creating a coherent narrative, providing us with a further opportunity to appreciate his capabilities. It may be added that when he chooses to summarize, al-Nuwayrī does so accurately and with taste. He may thus be favorably compared to al-Maqrīzī, writing a century later, whose slap-dash paraphrase of Ibn al-Furāt's chronicle for the early history of the Sultanate contains frequent inaccuracies and confused passages.[63]

It has been seen that in spite of his heavy dependence on a small group of authors, al-Nuwayrī often inserts unique information of unknown provenance, and once his own voice—albeit briefly—is heard. These pieces of evidences are of great interest to the historians of the Mongols. The way that the Mongols are portrayed by an early fourteenth century Mamluk official with ties to the Mamluk ruling class should also arouse the curiousity of scholars of both Ilkhanid and Mamluk history. In this paper, I have only given some of the precious items which can be gleaned form the pages fo al-Nuwayrī's section on the Mongols. A thorough reading of this text, not overly long or generally very difficult, would be rewarding for historians of the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate.

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been unable to find it at the beginning of Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, MS. Leiden ar. 2o, where it should appear.

[63] On this, see Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks, passim*.

A MAMLUK AMIR'S MAMLUK HISTORY: BAYBARS AL-MANṢŪRĪ AND THE *ZUBDAT AL-FIKRA*

D.S. Richards

In the light of his personal involvement in Mamluk military and political affairs, his access to documents and people, and of his interest in, and practice of, the art of history, Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī was potentially a significant historian of his own times and is a worthy individual to be considered in this present volume. As he is hardly an unknown figure, perhaps only a brief outline of his career may be necessary.[1]

Baybars came to Egypt in 659/1261 as a Mamlūk accompanying the Ṭawāshī Qaymāz, a *khādim* of the recently deceased ruler of Mosul, Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu'. He was about fourteen years old, so one may calculate that he was born around 645/1247. Nothing more is known of his early background, apart from the fact that he bore the *nisba* al-Khitā'ī, which suggests an origin from the east of the Islamic world, rather than the areas north of the Black Sea, and perhaps even a Mongol descent. In Cairo he was bought by the Amir Qalāwūn, which, in the light of the latter's future career, proved a fortunate circumstance. He was initially entrusted, as one of *al-ṣibyān al-ṣighār* (the corps of young pages), to the care of Qutqutiya, the mother of the future sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl. Whether this resulted through shared upbringing in any special relationship with Khalīl is doubtful, although Baybars' access to him in his eventual sultanate seems to have been reasonably free. Khalīl died in 693/1293 and is said by al-Ṣafadī[2] to have been "in his thirties or less." Therefore when Baybars started his career as a page, it is quite likely that Khalīl had not yet been born.

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[1] Personal information is given by Baybars himself in his chronicle. General notices may be found in: al-Ṣafadī, *Kītāb al-wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, various eds., (Istanbul, 1931–), x, 352; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-miʾa al-thāmina*, ed. Muhammad Sayyid Jad al-Haqq, (Cairo, 1966), ii, 43; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqaffā*, (Beirut, 1991), vol. ii, pp. 531–4.

[2] al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, xiii, 402.

Especially after Qalāwūn became sultan, Baybars' career advanced steadily through the various emiral ranks and led to important commissions and offices. Above all the office of the *dawādār* was associated with him. Eventually he reached the highest position below the sultan, that of *nā'ib al-salṭana*, but he was arrested in 712/1312 and imprisoned for five years or so. Until his death in 725/1325 he held a respected position but apparently no active role.

Baybars' historical output is not without its problems.[3] His largest and most important work is the *Zubdat al-fikra fi ta'rīkh al-hijra*, a large chronicle covering the Islamic period up to the author's own times. There is also a monograph on the Mamluk period, called *al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya*. This covers the Mamluk state up to the year 711/1311 and, although having a lot in common with the comparable part of the *Zubda*, has independent features but is generally on a smaller scale. There was also an abridged version of the *Zubda*, which may or may not be the work that is extant in an Ambrosiana manuscript, entitled *Mukhtār al-akhbār*.[4] The modern editor of this work has speculated that it may really be identical with the *al-Laṭa'if fī akhbār al-khalā'if*, a title which is also attributed to Baybars[5] but is nowhere extant as such. This identification is probably incorrect as al-'Aynī in the fifteenth century quoted explicitly from *al-Laṭā'if* in terms that do not correspond to the comparable passage in the *Mukhtār al-Akhbār*.[6] For present purposes I confine myself to the *Zubdat al-fikra* and its account of the early Mamluk regime, obviously the most interesting part of the whole.[7]

It has been claimed on the basis of various reports[8] that Baybars' historical writing, specifically the *Zubda*, was "ghosted" for him by his secretary, a Coptic official and man of letters, Shams al-Riyāsa

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[3] For his works see: *EI2* (s.v. "Baybars al-Manṣūrī"); E. Ashtor, "Some Unpublished Sources for the Bahri Period," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, ix, 11–30; idem, "Etude sur quelques chroniques mamloukes," *Israel Oriental Studies*, i, 1971, pp. 272–277; D.P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography etc.*, (Wiesbaden, 1970), esp. pp. 4–10; U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, Bd. 1, (Freiburg, 1970), index.

[4] Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān, (Cairo, 1993).

[5] See F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, (Leiden, 1968), 408.

[6] See al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-jumān*, (Cairo, 1987–), p. 10, and Baybars, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, p. 87.

[7] The present author's edition of this part of the *Zubdat al-fikra* appeared as vol. 42 of the *Bibliotheca Islamica*, (Beirut, 1998).

[8] E.g. al-Ṣafadī, x, p. 352.

b. Kabar.[9] The probable source of these reports, al-Nuwayrī, has a significant qualification, which perhaps means only that Ibn Kabar selected and gathered *early* historical material or that he helped Baybars *early* in his writing.[10] Baybars' scholarly and literary interests were widely noted, and his legal expertise in Ḥanafī law was recognised to the extent that he was acknowledged as a *muftī*. We should certainly be wary of any suggestion that such literary activity was beyond Baybars as a *mamlūk*. Indeed, al-Sakhāwī rejected any notion that Baybars needed help for his literary endeavours.[11] Learning and literary interests were far from unknown in *mamlūk* ranks. Al-Maqrīzī, speaking of the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, stated that the education of *mamlūk*s led to there being amongst them *ʿālim ʿarīf wa adīb shāʿir*.

The *Zubda* has often been used by scholars from a British Library manuscript (Ms Add. 23325), which may well have been revised under the direction of Baybars himself, but it is now defective. It starts abruptly in the year 655/1257 and ends equally abruptly in the year 709/1309. The existence of a manuscript at Yale (Ms Landberg 758) appears to have been completely overlooked. Admittedly, that manuscript is of a late date (it is dated 1270/1854), but it includes the beginnings of the Mamluk sultanate and provides a check and fills in lacunae up to the year 692/1294. This Yale Ms is certainly not a later epitome of the *Zubda*, neither is it a nineteenth century copy of the British Library manuscript. It is independent of it, so questions arise: from what (and also where) was it copied at that late date? Was there somewhere another older copy now lost!?

What year did Baybars' *Zubda* reach in its coverage? Al-ʿAynī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī state that it went up to 724/1324, the year before Baybars' death, but al-ʿAynī gives no unambiguous quotation from his writings after 712/1312, which was the year of his arrest. Note also that to all intents and purposes his other historical work, the *Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya*, finishes in 711/1311. The quotations attributed to Baybars al-Manṣūrī in al-ʿAynī are, of course, a useful supplement

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[9] See *EI2*, s.v. Ibn Kabar.

[10] al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, Ms. Leiden or. 19(b), fol. 103b, & Ms. Köprülü 1188, fol. 451b–452a.

[11] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Flān bi'l-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-ta'rīkh*, (Dār al-kutūb al-ʿilmiyya, Beirut, n.d.), p. 311.

to the British Library Ms, which, it should be remembered, breaks off in 709/1309.

A related question concerns the composition date of this final Mamluk section. There is next to no internal evidence, apart from a couple of instances where text given under the year 704/1304 presupposes a knowledge of events that happened in 709/1309 and as late as 725/1325, the year of his death, and therefore could not have been written before those dates. The more important unanswered (and probably unanswerable) question is did Baybars write the bulk of his account either during or after his imprisonment. Was his imprisonment of the sort that allowed him such literary activity? Quite naturally one might assume that such a change in his fortunes would have some affect on his writings, prompting one to pick up certain tones in some of his remarks.

Initially Baybars relied much on the royal biographies of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir but in so far as his writings reflect his own later experiences, he himself became a source, whether acknowledged or not, for later chroniclers, for example al-Nuwayrī, Ibn al-Furāt, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abī'l-Faḍā'il, and then later Ibn Taghrī Birdī and al-ʿAynī. Indeed, with reference to the dating of events in 709/1309, al-ʿAynī wrote: 'Reliance must be on what he [Baybars] relates, for he knows more about these people's circumstances than anyone else.' Under the year 691/1292 al-ʿAynī considered an account of Baybars to be more authentic than al-Yūsufī's, the author of the *Nuzhat al-nāẓir*, because Baybars was the direct participant (*ṣāḥib al-wāqiʿa*).

Some of his information is derived from eye-witnesses who remain anonymous, but Baybars does acknowledge certain individuals as his sources. For instance, his information on Mongol affairs, both for the Ilkhanids and the Golden Horde, came from named political refugees, a Mu'min Agha, who had been *shiḥnat al-Ǧazīra* and the Amir Jankli b. Albaba; and also from a released prisoner of war (the Amir Fatḥ al-Dīn b. Ṣabra al-Mihmandār). It is noticeable too that Baybars is interested in reports of ambassadorial itineraries, which perhaps came his way in his official capacity as *dawādār*.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir was not only a source of information but also Baybars' model for style. Baybars obviously delights in a highly poetical language and rhymed prose. In my judgement he carries it off rather well—but all depends on one's taste. There are several powerful set-piece descriptions. One might cite his account of an earthquake in 702/1302, not only for its forceful language but also for

engaging human detail, like the account of the *laban* seller who survived three days in the ruins of his shop, the timbers of which had interlocked over his head, nourishing himself from an accessible jar of *laban*. It is perhaps on account of his literary bent that Baybars inserts into his history the wordy preambles of his successive *iqṭāʿ* diplomas. Each of these breaks off just when solid information concerning the nature of the grant is about to be given. They are surely cited for the enjoyment of their elaborate style.

His literary bent led him to insert quite a large amount of poetry. Frequently this is not simply attached to the notice of someone's demise, as a sample of that person's productions, but the verses are used carefully to sum up a situation or to point a moral or practical message. Here and there the verses are attributed but most often not, and it is possible that some are his own.

The later years of his history are evidently the work of an insider, of someone who grew up within the Mamluk hierarchy and rose to high rank. He writes therefore with basic authority about the events he participated in, but it is hardly possible to describe the whole as autobiographical. There is in the end something disappointing about his work. There are still veils between us and his experiences. Most obvious is the vagueness of many of his remarks. When the reader would love him to speak clearly and divulge some inside information, he says, concerning the motivation of the sultan, something like "because of matters that annoyed him, occupied his mind and disturbed his thoughts," or "things necessitated" whatever course of events was being referred to. No doubt there were still matters that it was unwise to be too specific about, and prudence ruled.

Granted his personal career, his writing is, as one would expect, full of his devotion to, and support for, the house of Qalāwūn. Much of this was no doubt genuine and heart-felt. On the restoration of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the throne, Baybars is staunchly legitimist: "The sultanate returned to its [proper] heir and the rule of al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn's house] was established for the third [of the line]." However, if much was written after his arrest, was there also an understandable desire to win back favour, to ingratiate himself? For example, when Baybars pointedly states that he was absent in Alexandria during the time some *mamlūks* were plotting in the capital, is this a special plea and is there a significance in his further claim that God always kept him clear of any *fitna*?! When he expresses his outrage that Baybars al-Jashnakīr and Burlughī were imprisoned in 693/1294

on the basis of "mere suspicion and false reports . . . till God declared their innocence", is he making a hint about his own case?

I have formed a view of Baybars, which is subjective, of course, and perhaps fanciful. I think of him as a worthy, honest and somewhat conventional man and a good professional soldier. There is plenty to suggest that he was assigned various important tasks during his career and that he carried out his military duties well. He gives an interesting account, although hardly a disinterested one, of a tactical initiative of his at the seige of Acre. His wish to be allowed to leave Kerak and to join al-Ashraf Khalīl on this expedition against the Crusader capital was probably not without an element of career opportunism, as was his further wish to join the direct service of the sultan and return with him to Cairo. On an expedition in 705/1305 Baybars held effective command because the nominal commander, Bektāsh al-Fakhrī, was deaf and nearly blind, but Baybars consulted him on all orders because of his sense of what was due to Bektāsh's seniority and standing. This, I feel, is typical of him. He was a conformist, who liked things to go according to custom and regularity. He approved of, and exemplified in his own career, the orderly and gradual advancement within the Mamluk regime on the basis of experience and seniority, whose loss al-Maqrīzī later so lamented. He was proud to be a member of this *mamlūk* caste. When he wrote of the death in 707/1307 of "the last of the Baḥriyya", Baybars al-Jāliq, he added a paean of praise in favour of "the Manṣūrī band and the Nāṣirī group" whom God had established, on the decline and passing of their predecessors, to aid Islam and to whom He had brought much new manpower from "the land of the Tatars". Is this Baybars, the Khitā'ī, speaking?

Baybars portrays himself as firmly loyal to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during the latter's disputes with the leading emirs and two periods out of power. The advice that he records having given at various crisis moments was eirenic and not particularly useful, in that it skirted the real issues. Probably Baybars was not a very effective politician. His advice to avoid the exacerbation of differences was very laudable but largely ignored, and he himself could not resist the will and ambitions of stronger colleagues. When al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was thinking of retiring to Kerak for the second time, Baybars in council came up with an historical parallel, how the Prophet Muḥammad and the first two caliphs could rule successfully from

Medina, portrayed as no more central than Kerak. So why could al-Nāṣir not do the same from Kerak? As an example of Baybars' application of his historical knowledge, this, with its ignoring of ultimate developments and unawareness of different circumstances, does not impress very greatly!

His writing like that of most historians of his times is strong on piety and morality. His moral judgements are illustrated by his contrasting sketches of the careers of two individuals, both of whom began as sufis. On one side is Baybars' portrayal (*sub anno* 695) of the altruistic services rendered to many by the Shaykh Ḥasan al-Jawāliqī al-Qalandarī through the close and influential contacts that he formed successively with Ḥusām al-Dīn Ṭurunṭāy, al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā, al-Manṣūr Lājīn, and the Amirs Salār and Baybars al-Jashnakīr, all this, we are given to understand, while his reputation for probity and lack of avarice was preserved. On the other hand, Baybars traces (*sub anno* 704) the rise and fall of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Shaykhī. After a beginning in a menial trade in Cairo, travels as a sufi, influential contacts made in Mardīn, and his return to Cairo as part of a Mongol embassy, he switched to a military career and rose through the governorship of Cairo and another financial office to be vizier. He achieved all this, we are told, by illegal and oppressive means, but met his just deserts from God. There is implied criticism for unidentified *arbāb al-dawla* who supported him and benefited from his period of office. Is Baybars' own case in his mind when he writes: "Let the wise man beware, when fate raises him to lofty castles. After the rise comes the fall and after power the overthrow!"

My impression is that Baybars did all he could, in the vernacular, "to keep his nose clean." When al-Nāṣir was plotting in Kerak to return to power for the third time, he used one of Baybars' *mamlūk*s, who was resident in Syria, to carry messages to emirs in Egypt. When this *mamlūk* under interrogation somehow told a convincing story and, one assumes, kept the messages undiscovered, no doubt Baybars breathed a sigh of relief. The situation could have been extremely dangerous for him, but he does not even tell us whether this was done with his knowledge.

And yet eventually, after a period of exercising high office, he was imprisoned along with several other emirs. Why? There is no explanation. The timing might suggest that his arrest was associated with the defection to the Ilkhanids of Qarāsunqur and other senior amirs. The Sultan al-Nāṣir was concerned about the sympathy for the

defectors and the lack of zeal in pursuing them, shown by certain emirs. It is possible that Baybars, rightly or wrongly, was a target for similar suspicions.[12] It is somewhat odd to read Baybars' unengaged statement: "I too was arrested when we came back up from the *mawkib* (the levée), and I was imprisoned in the Citadel for about two months and then transferred to Kerak." Here, as in many other passages, we are left with a feeling of disappointment, that there is so much more to be said. However, Baybars lived long before our own age of psychological awareness and absorption in self.

[12] See Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Chronik*, ed. H. Roemer (Cairo, 1960), ix, pp. 229, 243.

ʿALĪ AL-BAGHDĀDĪ AND THE JOY OF MAMLUK SEX

Robert Irwin

ʿAlī al-Baghdādī wrote *Kitāb al-Ẓahr al-Anīq fi-Lubūs wa'l-Ta'nīq* ('The Book of Delicate Flowers regarding the Kiss and the Embrace') in Egypt some time in the fourteenth century. A manuscript of the fourteenth century survives in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (De Slane Cat, Arabe 3671). It was presumably this manuscript which René Khawam used for his translation, *Les Fleurs éclatantes dans les baisers et l'accolement* (Paris, 1973), though he does not actually identify the source of his translation. Apart from Khawam's introduction to his translation, there is no secondary literature on ʿAlī al-Baghdādī, except for a couple of pages in Luce Lopez-Baralt's *Un Kama Sutra español* in which ʿAlī's book is one of the various works of erotica which Lopez-Baralt compares with his main text, a sixteenth-century Tunisian Morisco erotic treatise.[1]

ʿAlī al-Baghdādī was not a historian. However, what he wrote does have some historical interest. Almost nothing is known about Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAlī al-Baghdādī except what he tells us about himself in his own book. He flourished in Egypt in the 1340s and 1350s. He had a number of friends high up in the military hierarchy. He accompanied the Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn on his final trip out of Cairo to Upper Egypt. He was one of those responsible for dealing with the property of the intestate during the Black Death. Thinking of the Black Death, one thinks of Boccaccio and there are indeed resemblances and points of comparison between the *Decameron* and the *Ẓahr al-Anīq*. ʿAlī's book is a collection of twenty-five bawdy stories designed to illustrate the faithlessness, craft and malice of women. Such compilations are common in medieval Arabic literature.[2] However, what gives ʿAlī al-Baghdādī's work its special interest is that some at least of his stories are apparently told

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[1] L. Lopez-Baralt's *Un Kama Sutra español* (Madrid, 1992), 258–60. Lopez Baralt has perforce had to rely on Khawam's translation.

[2] For a discussion of some this literature, see F. Malti-Douglas, *Women's Body. Women's Word; Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, (Princeton, 1991).

by or about real historical figures in late-thirteenth century and early to mid-fourteenth-century Egypt and Syria.

A reliable source on the sexual lives of the Mamluk élite and of the people they governed would be welcome. Conventional chronicles were discreet on this sort of subject matter. They reported the occasional homosexual scandals—such as the Amir Taybughā al-Qāsimī's affair with a pretty young mamluk, or the powerful Amīr Sayf al-Dīn Almās's rape of a boy, or al-Nāṣir Aḥmad's affair with a Bedouin at Kerak.[3] It is curious that the chronicles are actually more forthcoming about homosexual liaisons than they are about heterosexual ones. Adultery seems to have been a taboo subject for al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī and the other chroniclers. Nevertheless, though chronicles avoided the fraught topic of adultery, the notion that, for example, some women used going to the shops as a pretext for commencing adulterous affairs is not a theme which is confined to the stories of ʿAlī al-Baghdādī and *The Thousand and One Nights*. According to Ibn al-Ḥājj's moralising fourteenth-century treatise, the *Madkhal*, a shopkeeper "must be careful when a woman comes to buy something, to look at her behaviour, for if she was one of those women dressed up in delicate clothes, exposing her wrists, or some of her adornments, and speaking in a tender and soft voice, he should leave the selling transaction and give her his back until she leaves the shop peacefully . . ."[4] Al-Turkmānī's manual on *bidʿa* (unacceptable innovation) also warned against predatory female behaviour in various contexts.[5]

A collection of anecdotes that spilled the beans about the goings-on of the élite in the Mamluk Sultanate would be exciting. Would ʿAlī's book turn out to be the Islamic equivalent of the Venetian

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[3] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*, (Cairo, n.d.), ix, 114 and 301–2, Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, (Hyderabad, 1929–32), i, 294–5; c.f. ʿAbd al-Raziq, *La Femme au temps des Mamlouks en Egypte*, (Paris, 1973), 183. For the literary treatment of homosexuality in this period, see E.K. Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamluk Literature: al-Safadi's *Law'at al-shākī* and Ibn Dāniyāl's *al-Mutayyam*", in J.W. Wright Jr. and Everett K. Rowson (edd.), *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, (New York, 1997), 158–191.

[4] Huda Lutfi, "The Manners and Customs of Fourteenth Century Cairene Women: female anarchy versus male Sharīʿa order in Muslim prescriptive treatises", in N.R. Keddie and B. Baron (edd), *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, (New Haven, 1991), 103–4.

[5] Idrīs b. Baydakīn al-Turkumānī, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fi'l-ḥawādith wa'l-bidʿa*, ed., Subhi Labib (Stuttgart, 1987), i, especially 194–202.

writer Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534–6)? In that work, Aretino used his pen to simultaneously scourge and entertain the society he lived in and he presented courtesans reminiscing about the lives and vices of named contemporary figures. In the Islamic world, from Umayyad times onwards, there had been a tradition of poets using *hijā'* and *sukhf* to blackmail money out of otherwise stingy patrons. Certainly, satirical poetry aimed at identified and well-known figures flourished in the Mamluk period. The author of shadow-plays, Ibn Dāniyāl, and the lewd poet, Ibn Sūdūn al-Bashbughāwī come immediately to mind here.[6] In the Ayyubid period, the satirical poet, al-Wahrānī, had portrayed the distinguished chancery man and poet ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī as a homosexual and as a man who drank wine from the navels of slave-girls at orgies.[7] Indeed, al-Wahrānī and Ibn Dāniyāl are among the select band of those mentioned by ʿAlī in the preface to his book as being among his somewhat unsatisfactory predecessors. Those writers whom ʿAlī picked out as intellectual ancestors are a raffish crew: apart from al-Wahrānī and Ibn Dāniyāl, they include Ibn Quzmān, the famous twelfth-century Cordovan poet of wine, women and song, Ibn al-Nāzir, the twelfth-century author of lost treatises on love and the etiquette of companionship, and Ibn Mawalāhum, the early fourteenth-century author of an artisanal *maqāma*, as well as several shadow plays. ʿAlī al-Baghdādī found fault with his predecessors because their writings, unlike his, failed to focus on a single theme.[8]

In *A Turning Point in Mamluk History. The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Oalāwūn* (1310–1341), (Leiden, 1995), Amalia Levanoni has argued that the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad saw the beginning of the rot and that the roots of the decadence of the Mamluk

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[6] On Ibn Dāniyāl, see Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, ed. P. Kahle, prepared by D. Hopwood and M. Badawi, (Cambridge, 1992). On Ibn Sūdūn, see F. Kern, "Neuere agyptische Humoristen und Satiriker", in *Mitteilungen des Seminars fur Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin*, 9 (1906), 31–73; A. Vrolijk, *Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face: a study and critical edition of the "Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-muḍhik al-ʿabūs" by ʿAlī Ibn Sūdūn al-Basbugāwī (Cairo 810/1407 – Damascus 868/1464)*, (Leiden, 1998).

[7] M.C. Lyons and D.E.P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge, 1982), 118–9.

[8] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẓahr*, f. 1a; *Les Fleurs*, 29. (Unfortunately, the Bibliotheque's numbering of the folios of the manuscript is inconsistent, a problem further compounded by the faintness of their registration on the microfilm which I was permitted to consult. I have therefore had to provide my own numbering of the folios and this only sometimes coincides with that on the erratically numbered original.)

Sultanate can be traced to the early decades of the fourteenth century. Traditions were undermined, discipline slackened and money was ostentatiously squandered. It was during the reigns of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons and grandsons that royal women in particular got above themselves.[9] Some decades before Levanoni, David Ayalon had similarly identified effeminacy and the power of women at the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his immediate successors as the root of the decline of the Mamluk Sultanate.[10] It would be agreeable then to find anecdotal confirmation of all this in ʿAlī—of the wives of mamluks and civilians feasting and fornicating when the writing was already on the wall for the once vigorous Mamluk Sultanate.

ʿAlī al-Baghdādī gets things right or, in some cases, if not verifiably right at least plausibly right. In the first adventure, a respectable amīrs wife confesses how as a girl she learned some seductively acrobatic tricks, involving a tambourine and some glasses from some slave women who had been presented by the ruler of Mardin to al-Ashraf of Homs in the early 1260s.[11] The next story is narrated by Badr al-Dīn b. al-Bannāʾ, an amīr who was in attendance on al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the 1320s.[12] The third story is told by a scribe of the famous amīr, Baysarī.[13] At the beginning of the fifth story, ʿAlī al-Baghdādī says he was in Damascus in 744, which, he says, at that time was governed by the Amīr Ṭuquzdamur—and that is correct.[14] The sixth adventure in Aleppo provides a quantity of circumstantial information about how the Nāṣirī *madrasa* was built on the site of a synagogue sequestered in 727/1326–7.[15] The man whom ʿAlī meets there, Yūsuf al-Qayrawānī, tells a story in which he stays with Bedouin on the Euphrates. Yūsuf stays with one of the Banū Muhannā clan—and that would be right too.[16] Two of the stories,

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[9] A. Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Oalāwūn 1310–1341*, (Leiden, 1995), 184–192.

[10] D. Ayalon, "The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate", in ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon, *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, (Jerusalem, 1977), 267–295, esp. 287.

[11] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẕahr*, f. 6b, *Les Fleurs*, 39–40.

[12] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẕahr*, f. 6b, *Les Fleurs*, 41.

[13] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẕahr*, f. 9b, *Les Fleurs*, 47.

[14] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẕahr*, f. 19b, *Les Fleurs*, 63; c.f. Gaston Wiet, *Les Biographies du Manhal Ṣāfī = Memoires presentés a l'Intitut de l'Egypte*. 19 (Cairo, 1932), no. 1250.

[15] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẕahr*, f. 21b–22a, *Les Fleurs*, 67–8.

[16] On the Banū Muhannā, see D. Ayalon, "The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society", *JESHO*, 1 (1958), 264–5.

the thirteenth and the twenty-third, marginally involve the management of *iqṭāʿ*s. Part of the action in the fourth story hinges on a corvée in which the Sultan summoned all carvers of amber up to the Citadel. In 749/1348–9, the year of the Plague, ʿAlī tells us that he was working together with a Christian and a Jew in drawing up lists of the property of the intestate.[17] That would fit too, for the *Dīwān mawārith al-hashriyya* was very busy at that time and in Cairo and in Fustat, but not elsewhere, the relevant *dīwān*s had jurisdiction over Christian and Jewish, as well as Muslim property.[18]

In 738/1337–8 the narrator was with the Sultan when he went to Upper Egypt and he stopped off at Bahnasā where he heard yet more unedifying stories about the cunning of women.[19] ʿAlī is one year out here, for, on the occasion of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad marrying two of his daughters to two of the Governor of Damascus, Tankiz's sons, the Sultan did go on an elaborate hunting trip to Upper Egypt, but it was in 739/1338–9.[20] In Bahnasā, ʿAlī swapped experiences with the governor and his melancholy deputy. ʿAlī describes himself as meeting the governor of Bahnasā and later the governor of Cairo, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Qarāqūsh.[21] Bahāʾ al-Dīn Qarāqūsh did indeed hold the offices which ʿAlī ascribed to him.[22] The actual story told in the twenty-first chapter concerns the sexual and financial hunger of the Amir Sayf al-Dīn Qudayr when he was governor in Cairo in 726/1325–6. This amir can be identified as Sayf al-Qadūdār, whom al-Ṣafadī's biographical dictionary describes as having been governor of Cairo from 724 until 730.[23] The story about Qadūdār is told by aforementioned Qarāqūsh, who at the time was indeed one of the governor's deputies. In the twentieth of ʿAlī's stories, a fuller is fooled into thinking that he is a soldier and so then he gets caught up in the mobilisation to meet the Mongol invasion of 1303.[24]

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[17] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẓahr*, f. 80b; *Les Fleurs*, 174.
[18] M.W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, (Princeton, 1977), 175.
[19] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẓahr*, f. 99a; *Les Fleurs*, 212.
[20] al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, ed. M.M. Ziada, (Cairo, 1934–58), ii, 461.
[21] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẓahr* f. 99b; *Les Fleurs*, 212–3.
[22] J.-C. Garcin, *Un Centre Musulman de la Haute-Egypte Medievale: Qus*, (Paris, 1976), 193.
[23] al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, ed. H. Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden and Istanbul, 1931–), xxiv, 206.
[24] On this invasion, see R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382*, (Beckenham, Kent, 1986), 101.

However, despite all the authentic-looking detail, we do not need to take ʿAlī al Baghdādī very seriously as a source on contemporary scandals. On closer examination, some of his bawdy stories turn out to be hundreds of years old, while others may be thousands of years old. The second adventure relates how a wife, summoned to an immoral assignation, finds herself confronted by her husband, but she then manages to bluff her way out of it by claiming that she was only testing him. This is the second part of 'The Weeping Bitch' story and as such is found in the Seven Viziers cycle of stories and subsequently incorporated into the *Thousand and One Nights*.[25] The fourth adventure relates how a merchant came back from work early because the Sultan had commandeered his workers, who were carvers in amber for a special corvée. The adulterous wife, thus surprised, double-bluffs her way out of trouble by claiming that she has a lover hidden in the coffer at the end of the room. This seems so ridiculous for her to admit outright that the husband takes it as a joke and does not bother to look inside the coffer. Setting the detail of the Mamluk Sultan's corvée aside, this is essentially 'The Tailor and the Lady and the Captain' and it is found in some versions of the *Nights*.[26]

The Fifth Story, set in Damascus allegedly at the time when Ṭuquzdamur governed it, is about a woman who sleeps with a grocer in return for various commodities, but who ends up with sand in exchange for her troubles, but yet manages to talk her way out of it. This is essentially the same as 'The Story of the Wife and the Grocer' in *Syntipas* and in the *Nights*.[27] The Sixth Story features a man who has been compiling a comprehensive list of the ruses of women, but he is tricked out of it by a woman's ruse. A similar character appears in *Syntipas* (though the winning ruse is different).[28] ʿAlī al-Baghdādī's Fourteenth Story concerns a woman who has sex successively with a slave and his master and then, when her hus-

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[25] V. Chauvin, *Bibliographie des Ouvrages Arabes*, vol. 8, Syntipas, (Liege, 1904), 45, no. 13; "The Wife's Device to Cheat her Husband" in R. Burton, *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights*, (Benares = Stoke Newington, London, 1885), vi, 152–5; R. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, (Harmondsworth, 1994), 63–4.

[26] R. Burton, *Supplemental Nights*, vi, 263–9.

[27] Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, 8, 42, no. 10; Burton, *Arabian Nights*, vi, 143–4, ("The Woman Who Made Her Husband Sift Dust").

[28] Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, 8, 69 no. 34.

band returns, she explains their presence in the house. This story has a similar provenance.[29]

Doubtless precursors or parallels for most of ʿAlī's stories can be found somewhere or other in the world's great story collections. Most of his tales are ancient folklore and, as such one can find some of them classified in Hasan El-Shamy's classification of Arab story-telling motifs. Mostly they fall within the range K1510 to K1550, 'Adulteress outwits husband'.[30] One can also find the same sort of material in Elisséeff's older classification of *Nights* stories in *Themes et motifs des Mille et Une Nuits*, under the headings 'Amoureux surpris en flagrant delit' and 'Mari trompé'.[31]

What is more, looking at the overtly Mamluk content of these stories, the chronology of some of them is slightly awkward. It is true that some of these chronological problems are only apparent, as they do not appear in the manuscript, but have been created by Khawam's mistranslation of key passages in the text. For example, the eleventh adventure allegedly happened in 1338 and features an aged bawd, Umm Sanjar, who, according to Khawam's translation, specialised in rendering services to, among others, most of the mamluks of the Sultan al-Saʿīd Berke Khan. By the 1330s this was a pretty elderly and, presumably, not very sexually active group of mamluks. In fact there is no reference to mamluks of al-Saʿīd Berke Khan in the manuscript. Rather the old woman acted as a bawd for amīrs, wealthy men (*al-suʿadā*) and royal mamluks.[32] Another story apparently set in the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad features a merchant who made his fortune in the reign of al-Ṣāliḥ. Khawam identifies the latter with

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[29] Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, 38–9, no. 7; Burton, *Arabian Nights*, vi, 138–9.

[30] Hasan al-Shamy, *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification* (Bloomington, 1995), 1, 247–9.

[31] N. Elisséeff, *Themes et Motifs des Mille et Une Nuits*, (Beirut, 1949), 91–2, 13g–40.

[32] al-Baghdādī, *Les Fleurs*, 102, c.f. *Kitāb al-Ẓahr* f. 40b. In general, Khawam's translation cannot be relied on for matters of detail. On p. 31 and p. 41 Shaykh al-birr has been translated as "le Cheikh de Bien". It would make more sense to translate this as Shaikh of the desert. On page 57 (corresponding to f. 16a) the Amīr Shikār, or Emir of the Hunt, of Qalāwūn, has been transformed by Khawam into Qalāwūn's private secretary. On p. 151 Khawam has 'Ahmad le Petit-Cheikh, palfrenier de Chams al-Dīne Sounqour al-Achqar, a l'époque de la royauté Nasiride'. However, the famous Amīr Sunqur al-Ashqar was not a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The manuscript (f. 59a) actually has Aḥmad al-Shuwaykh serving as *mihmandār*, or guest-master, to Sunqur al-Alfī. And so on.

the Sultan Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (r. 1240–9).[33] It would be surprising to find such an apparently elderly merchant taking such a vigorous interest in the activities of his young wife. But the difficulty disappears if we identify 'Ṣāliḥ' with the Mamluk Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl (r. 1342–5) and this would give us a new terminus a quo for the writing of the *Zahr al-Anīq*.

Even so there are occasional anomalies in the opening story about the acrobatic lady with the glasses allegedly has her learning her arts in the 1260s. So, she would have been quite mature to be turning such agile tricks thirty years on. It is odd to find one of the mamluks featured in these stories called 'Izz al-Dīn Baktimur, rather than Sayf al-Dīn Baktimur which would have been a more normal coupling of *laqab* and *ism*.[34] So what is going on?

One of the attractive features of the Zahr al-Anīq is the way the locale for the narration of the story keeps shifting. The first one starts in Cairo. At the beginning of the second story we are introduced to one of Cairo's dining clubs. Various specific quarters of the city are referred to throughout the book. By the fifth adventure we are in Damascus. The sixth adventure is Aleppo. The eighth in Qayrawan. By the eleventh we are back in Cairo and in a quarter close to the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn. The twentieth is in Damascus, the twenty-first in Bahnasā. There is, of course a well-known precedent for this frequent shifting of fictional locales—in al-Hamadhānī's *Maqamāt* and in that of al-Ḥarīrī.[35] In moving his story around, 'Alī al-Baghdādī was following a well-established convention of Arabic fiction—as in so much else. The Wiles of Women was an important and popular genre of literature. It dominated the *Syntipas*, or Sindibad, cycle of stories. It was an important ingredient in the stories about the criminal activities of Crafty Dalilah in the *Nights*. The theme was not restricted to the Arab world. It dominated western fabliaux as well as medieval Indian fiction. It is hard now to understand the obsessive appeal of these stories about faithless, cunning wives. In modern British fiction it only finds echoes in Evelyn Waugh's

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[33] Khawam, *Les Fleurs*, 154.

[34] Khawam, *Les Fleurs*, 149.

[35] On the *Maqāmāt*s, see Abdelfattah Kilito, *Les Séances: Recits et codes culturels chez Hamadhani et Hariri*, (Paris, 1983) and A.F.L. Beeston, "Al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī and the maqāmāt genre", in edd. J. Ashtiany et al. *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, (Cambridge, 1990), 125–135.

A Handful of Dust and, perhaps, in some of the novels of Julian Barnes—but, even there, neither Waugh's nor Barnes's adulteresses seem particularly cunning.

In twentieth-century Britain it is acceptable to present fictions about the craft and malice of adulterous women as fiction. This was not the case in fourteenth-century Egypt or in the medieval Islamic world more generally. In his preface to *al-Bukhalāʾ*, 'The Misers', the tenth-century essayist, al-Jāḥiẓ, hit the nail on the head, when he argued that anecdotes were only truly interesting when one knew the characters and can trace them back to their sources by establishing a kind of contact with their protagonists.'[36] Similarly al-Tanūkhī in his *Nishwar al-Muḥādarat*, or 'Desultory Conversations', took care to present his stories as events that had happened to actual people. Moreover, he often gave his sources for the stories he was relating.[37] Al-Ḥarīrī, the author of the *Maqamāt*, was embarrassed to be writing fiction, but he defended the activity by referring to the citation of legend in the Qur'an, by insisting that his stories had a moral purpose, by seeking to link his writing with the acceptable and established genre of animal fables.[38] Even so, he was indeed attacked for peddling pointless lies about non-existent people. Even more tellingly, some of his supporters defended him on the grounds that he had not made Abū Zayd up and that he had actually encountered this man preaching in a mosque.[39] The *Thousand and One Nights* was prefaced by an exordium which insists on the importance of learning from the examples of stories about past peoples.[40] Within the *Nights*, Sheherezade does not make up stories; she transmits them. Many of the stories within the *Nights* were adventures which had been fathered onto historical personages, such as Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Barmecides, al-Maʾmūn, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī and Abū Nuwās.

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[36] Abū ʿUthmān b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *The Book of Misers*, tr. R.B. Serjeant (Reading, 1997), 6–7.

[37] On al-Tanūkhī, see D.S. Margoliouth, *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, (London, 1922); J. Ashtiany, "Al-Tanūkhī's *al-Faraj baʿd al-shidda* as a literary source" in *Arabicus Felix: Luminosus Britannicus: essays in Honour of A.F.L. Beeston on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. A. Jones, (Reading 1991), 108–28.

[38] R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, (London, 1907), 330.

[39] Killito, *Séances*, 248–59; on the general issue of the dubious status of fiction in medieval Arab culture, see now S.A. Bonnebacker, "Nihil obstat in storytelling" in edd. R.G. Hovanissian and G.Sabagh, *The Thousand and One Nights in Arabic Literature and Society*, (Cambridge, 1997), 56–77.

[40] *The Arabian Nights*, translated by Husain Haddawy, (New York, 1990), 2.

So what a reading of ʿAlī al-Baghdādī's book presents us with is an example of the embarrassments of fiction. Stories had to be useful. From reading ʿAlī's stories, one could take example and be put on guard against cunning women. Stories were not supposed to be made up; rather they were transmitted by their compiler. ʿAlī was careful to provide a *silisila*, however perfunctory for most of his stories. What was more, he transplanted those stories into the Mamluk environment which his readers would be familiar with and he larded them with (in the words of W.S. Gilbert) 'Merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative'.

As has been argued above, it was common enough to provide a story with a bogus historical context by fathering it on to some historical personage. However, ʿAlī goes farther than that. The context he sets his stories in is more than a matter of mere names and dates. The stories are garnished with details about shopping, perfumes, hashish eating, drinking clubs and the food consumed at them, the costumes of soldiers, shepherds and wives of merchants, apartment blocks, and so on. That is precisely the value of his stories. In their striving for artistic verisimilitude, they do provide accurate information about the texture of life in mid-fourteenth-century Egypt. In providing a more or less contemporary setting for the stories he chose for his anthology, ʿAlī was unusual. However he was not unique. The 'Hunchback' cycle of stories in the *Nights* was set in what is unmistakably Mamluk Cairo and is cluttered with all sorts of details about topography, food, costume and commercial transactions. Thus the Egyptian style of the hunchback's collar, the tailor's detailed shopping-list, the Christian broker's itinerary through Cairo from the Jawli caranvansaray through the Bāb al-Naṣr, the precise figures of the donkey-men's brokerage fees, the reference to the Jirjis Market off Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, the amputation performed at the Bāb Zuwayla and so on.[41] The Hunchback cycle is exceptional among the core stories of the earliest *Nights* manuscript in striving for a contemporary and detailed verisimilitude. Other core stories tend to be set in the never-never land of, say, Hārūn al-Rashīd's Baghdad. However, other stories added to the core collection of

[41] *The Arabian Nights*, (trans. Haddawy), 206–295; c.f. Irwin, *The Arabian Nights. A Companion*, 137–9.

Nights stories in the late Mamluk or the Ottoman period—such as 'The Governor of Qūs and the Sharper', or 'The Merchant of Cotton and his Frankish Wife' seem to be anchored in the realities of their time. The *Zahr al-Anīq* may be mostly worthless as a source on the sex-lives of the great, but it still seems to me to have value as a source on the material history of Mamluk Egypt and Syria.

It is also possible that ʿAlī al-Baghdādī's book is of value as a source on social attitudes in the mid-fourteenth century Sultanate. ʿAlī's treatment of the military, who feature in quite a number of stories, shows neither respect or affection. The Turkish élite are portrayed as greedy and stupid—and some of them cannot speak Arabic properly. However, in one of the stories, the thirteenth, a Bedouin from Upper Egypt is portrayed as even more stupid than the Mamluk officer and his agent who outwit the Bedouin. (The denseness of the Bedouin was also an occasional feature in the *Thousand and One Nights*, for example in the story in which Crafty Delilah persuades a Bedouin to take her place on the condemned person's cross by assuring him that this is the place where one gets served fritters.)[42] And, finally on attitudes, although ʿAlī worked with a Jew in listing and valuing the property of the intestate during the Black Death, the eighteenth of his stories is distinctly anti-Semitic. It is also interesting to note that the amīrs and mamluks in ʿAlī al-Baghdādī's scabrous tales do not dwell in the Citadel in splendid isolation. They live cheek by jowl with the civilians in all parts of Cairo.

While on the subject of attitudes, I should note that Lopez-Baralt has taken a different approach to ʿAlī's book in drawing attention to the pervasive and at rather hypocritical mixture of piety and immorality in the text. ʿAlī pretends to expect the approval of God for what he has written. At the end of the nineteenth adventure, in which a hashish-eater has been fooled into thinking that he is a shepherd, ʿAlī al-Baghdādī prays to God to keep us from falling prey to such incidents. At the end of the seventeenth adventure (which is about how a carpenter manages to have sex with a man's wife in full view of that man), ʿAlī hopes that God will curse such libertines. At the end of the first adventure ʿAlī begs God to forgive the story's adulterous lovers. But of course in all medieval Arab texts,

[42] Burton, *Arabian Nights*, iv, 144–171, esp. 164–6.

even in such satanic documents as the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, pious invocations served as a kind of literary small-change. Lopez-Baralt rightly characterises ʿAlī's perfunctory moralising as 'cosmetic' and as the sign of a bad conscience (*malestar de concienca*).[43]

Despite what has been argued above, it is difficult to be certain that all of the stories in ʿAlī al-Baghdādī are pre-Mamluk or made-up. I have found no parallels for a few of them. Some have the ring of truth—or, if not that, then at least the dull clank of possibility. The twenty-first adventure which concerns the *wālī* of Cairo, Sayf al-Dīn Qudaydār's failure to seduce the daughter of a great amīr and how she tricked him by offering a bribe to let her Christian lover escape is straightforward enough to be possibly true. So too is the story of the melancholy deputy-governor of Bahnasā who was fleeced by a Cairene prostitute.

The craft-and-malice-of-women is a major genre in medieval literature and warnings against the power and adulterous proclivities of women provides a common theme for many story collections, such as the *Syntipas* cycle. Yet ʿAlī's book is not a straightforwardly misogynist collection of stories. Rather the sense of the book is that admiration is due to the women, while contempt is directed at the stupidity, boorishness, lust and greed of men, whether soldiers, shopkeepers, Bedouin and hashish eaters. ʿAlī's own preface urges the reader to take delight in (rather than warning from) the cunning and quick-wittedness of women.[44] Also, while it is the case that the women, in ʿAlī's book, usually devoted their quick wits to talking their way in or out of various men's beds, in the first story and more especially in the eleventh story what is being celebrated is the women's literary skills and their ability to produce impromptu poetry appropriate to any occasion.

ʿAlī, in fact, seems to have had a more positive attitude to women in Mamluk Egypt than some modern historians have shown. If the Mamluk Sultanate did indeed begin its slide towards decline and fall sometime around the mid-fourteenth century, surely it would make more sense to focus on the crisis brought about by the Black Death rather than to point the finger at the Sultan's wives and singing girls.[45] We have evidence that royal women spent a lot on extrava-

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[43] Lopez-Barrault, *Un Kama Sutra español*, 259–60.
[44] al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ẓahr* f. 1a–1b; Khawam, *Les Fleurs*, 29–30.
[45] D. Ayalon, "The Plague and its Effects upon the Mamluk Army", *JRAS*, (1946),

gant dresses, but not much evidence that they exercised any real political power (still less that any power they did exercise must have been deleterious). In any case, a such an exageratedly prolonged decline, which starts in the mid-fourteenth century and carries on through the 1360s, 70, 80s 90s, and goes on all the way through the fifteenth century and only reaches its culmination in the opening decades of the sixteenth century, is not a historiographically useful concept with which to work.

67–73; A. Udovitch, "England to Egypt, 1350–1500: Long-term Trends and Long-distance Trade", in M.A. Cook (ed.) *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, (London, 1970), 115–28; Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*; Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 134–8.

REPRESENTING THE MAMLUKS IN MAMLUK HISTORICAL WRITING

Nasser Rabbat

Mamluk historiography is among the richest and most varied of Islamic historical traditions. Scores of annals, biographical compendia, manuals for the chancery, geographical treatises (*masālik*), and topographical tracts (*khiṭaṭ*) span the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth century.[1] The majority of these sources have been edited and published, many in the last quarter-century, which added considerably to our knowledge of the history of the period and to our understanding of the parameters, structures, and limitations of this extraordinary historical output.[2] Yet scholarly evaluations and interpretations of Mamluk historiography are few.[3] Even fewer are those studies that go beyond primarily historiographical questions, such as the analysis of methods, genres, periodization, and scopes, to theorize on the concepts, uses, and import of history and history writing in the Mamluk society.[4]

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[1] On Mamluk historiography, see Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art," *Mamluk Studies Review*, 1 (1997): 15–43; U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg, 1970); D. Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun* (Wiesbaden, 1970); idem, "Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of his Contemporaries," in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes* ed. D. Little, (Leiden, 1976), 190–210; Shakir Mustafa, *al-Ta'rīkh al-ʿArabī wa'l-Mu'rikhun: Dirāsa fi Taṭawwur ʿIlm al-Ta'rīkh wa-Rijāluhu fi'l-Islam*, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1978–93), vol. 2, 139–304, all of vol. 3, vol. 4, 7–227; Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 2d ed., 1968), passim; T. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, (Cambridge, 1994), 182–231.

[2] M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994), 2, and n. 1, reminds us that despite its comparatively large and varied corpus in comparison to other Islamic historiographies, Mamluk historiography still suffers from many lacunae and discontinuities in time, geographic area, and subject matter; as for original documents, it is hopelessly dwarfed by the prodigious archives of contemporary Europe.

[3] For a pioneering evaluation of the patterns of dependence and relative originality of Mamluk prosopobiographies and chronicles, unfortunately limited to the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Little, *Introduction*, 94–99, 132–36.

[4] D. Krawulsky, "al-Intāj al-Thaqafī wa-Sharʿiyat al-Sulṭa" in her introduction to al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Absār fī-Mamālik al-Amṣār, Dawlat al-Mamālik al-Ūlā* (Beirut,

In this paper, I will focus on a crucial but rarely discussed problem in Mamluk historiography: the representation of the Mamluk ruling class in contemporary chronicles and biographies. I will try to answer two questions. The first is, how are the mamluks represented? The second is, does this representation reflect their motives, thoughts, mindsets, and beliefs, or those of the chroniclers and interpreters who wrote about them? My argument will be that, more than other analogous historical categories of class, race, or sect—which are all in essence discursively constructed—the Mamluk image in history is a construct in which the mamluks themselves played a negligible part.

From the perspective of Mamluk historical sources, Mamluk urban society can be divided *grosso modo* into three basic groups. First are the ruling Mamluks, a hodge-podge of imported slave-warriors of various ethnicities, but mostly Turkish or Turkicized, who formed an exclusive military élite. Second are the learned people or people whose professions involved reading and writing, who, for simplicity's sake, will be referred to as the literati, a heterogeneous assemblage which includes the *'ulamā'*, the *kuttāb*, and most of the *awlād al-nās*, or the Muslim-born sons of the Mamluks who were usually encouraged to pursue careers in the administration or the religious establishment.[5] Finally there are the common people, encompassing several

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1986), 15–37, presents a perceptive interpretation of the political and cultural impetus behind Mamluk historical writing and distinguishes between the early Bahri period and the period after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign; Remke Kruk, "History and Apocalypse: Ibn al-Nafīs' Justification of Mamluk Rule," *Der Islam* 72 (1995): 324–37, offers a cultural-political analysis of Ibn al-Nafis's unusual treatise; D.W. Morray, *An Ayyubid Notable and His World: Ibn al-'Adīm and Aleppo as Portrayed in His Biographical Dictionary of People Associated with the City* (Leiden, 1994), is a comprehensive interpretive study of a historian, his milieu, and his writing, albeit in the Ayyubid period. For a general critique of Mamluk history study and its limited use of theorization, see W.W. Clifford, "*Ubi Sumus?* Mamluk History and Social Theory," *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 45–62.

[5] I join here two groups that are usually thought of as distinct. Typical stratifications of the Mamluk society distinguish between two middle groups: the *'ulamā'* (sometimes combined with the *kuttāb*) and the merchants. See I. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1967), 79–85; B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge, 1993), 3. But my interest is in how these strata are articulated in the historical texts not how they appear in urban and economic settings. For the most recent treatment of *awlād al-nās*, see U. Haarmann, "Joseph's Law—The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt," in T. Philipp and U. Haarmann, eds., *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1998), 55–84, esp. 77–83.

socioeconomic layers from rich international merchants to poor artisans, with few fluid fringe elements such as the sufis and the *aḥdāth* (urban youth). These three groups did not constitute clearly differentiated social formations or classes in the modern sense, although they could be classified according to a loose economic stratification with the mamluks way up above all the rest, followed by some international merchants who were much richer than the literati, who in turn constituted a kind of middle professional class, and finally the commoners.[6] Nor were these classifications clearly demarcated or totally impermeable, although movement in and out of the Mamluk caste was very restricted, and those who managed it were exceptional cases that have to be explained on individual basis.[7] The ranks of the literati, on the other hand, were in principle open to all people, military and common alike, although *ʿulamāʾ* and *kuttāb* families strove to preserve their status by manipulating salaried offices and trying to pass them on to their sons, often with at least short-lived success.[8]

The three categories are neither equally nor comparably represented in the primary sources. The ruling Mamluks and the people in all their diversity are either stereotypically or caricaturally represented or misrepresented, though to varying degrees and in different ways. The Mamluks occupy center stage in most historical narrative.

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[6] A somewhat overlooked field of research despite the abundance of information, income levels in the Mamluk society offer important clues to understanding the dynamics of social movements. Cf., Éli Strauss (Eliyahu Ashtor), "Prix et salaire à l'époque mamlouk," *Revue d'Études Islamiques* 17 (1949): 49–94; David Ayalon, "The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society," *JESHO* 1(1958): 37–65, 257–96; H. Rabie, "Size and Value of the Iqtaʿ in Egypt 564–741 A.H., 1169–1341 A.D.," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East* ed. M.A. Cook (London, 1970), 129–38, and his larger, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741 A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972).

[7] In the late Mamluk period, the case of Shahīn al-Khalwatī, a mamluk turned master sufi under Qāytbāy, is a famous one. A *khanqah* built in 1538 carries his name. In another instance cited by al-Khatīb al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥasr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʿAṣr*, ed. Hasan Habashi (Cairo, 1970), 275, Qāytbāy is said to have been particularly irked by a mamluk whom he called *zuqaqī* (riffraff) and ordered doubly beaten as a punishment, not only for his offensive behavior (he left his *ṭabaqa* and got married without a permission), but also because, while beaten, he was using the commoners' invocation of "*yā sittī nafīsa*" instead of asking for mercy by imploring *à la mamluk*, "*tuba khujam*." For a lesser known case from the early Mamluk period (ca. 720) of a mamluk who became a Shafiʿite *faqīh* and changed his name from Sanjar to Ṭalḥa, see al-Safadi, *al-Wāfī*, xvi, 460.

[8] On the manipulation of *ʿulamāʾ* posts in Damascus see Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 57–113.

But they appear literally as actors given lines to read, or worse still, they are spoken (or written) for and about, but they rarely speak themselves. They are, in other words, truly re-presented. The people, on the other hand, are seldom referred to either individually or collectively. The only exception are rich merchants who are singled out for their learned status or when their wealth is confiscated by the authorities and made public. Otherwise, when they are mentioned at all, the people are almost always represented in general terms, such as *al-nās* (people), *al-ʿāmma* (the commoners), or *ahl al-balad* (the inhabitant of the place), and as accessory or ornamental devices to complete a scene or to accentuate an event. The literati, finally, make up an articulate and highly visible group between the Mamluks and the people. They controlled all historical writing, dominated the narratives, and represented themselves and others through their own perceptions, views, prejudices, and frameworks of interpretation.

The majority of the authors and compilers of historical books were members either of the *ʿulamāʾ* or the *kuttāb* classes (the two greatly overlapped in the Mamluk period). A sizable minority consisted of *awlād al-nās*, who should be intellectually, socially, and ideologically classified with the *ʿulamāʾ* and *kuttāb* despite their Mamluk lineage, Mamluk privileges, and knowledge of the Turkish language. Only very few of the known authors belonged to the Mamluk caste itself. One was Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 1324/25), a great amir who held several high positions under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Another was the unknown author of the chronicle edited by K.V. Zetterstéen, who was perhaps a simple *jundī* (soldier) in the service of a Nāṣirī amir. Still another was the author known as Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī, tentatively identified as Aqsunqur al-Muẓaffarī Amīr Jandar, who played an important though very brief role during the brutal reign of al-Muzaffar Ḥajjī (1346–47).[9] They should theoretically provide us with different perspectives onto the Mamluk culture as lived by their class, but aside from a scattering of scholastic remarks on the Arabic meaning of Turkish terms used by the Mamluks and a palpable sense of

[9] For Baybars al-Manṣūrī, see Ṣafadī, *Wafi*, x, 352; the introductions to the three published books of his work: Abd al-Hamid Salih Hamdan, *al-Tuḥfa al-Mulūkiyya fi'l-Dawla al-Turkiyya*, 5–13; idem, *Mukhtār al-Akhbār*, baʾ-yaʾ; and S.M. Elham to *Zubdat al-Fikra fi Taʾrīkh al-Hijra*, x; Little, *Introduction*, 4–5; for Zetterstéen's author see Ibid., 18–19; for al-Shujāʿī, see P.M. Holt, "Shams al-Shujāʿī: A Chronicler identified?" *BSOAS*, 58 (1995): 532–34.

pride in the Mamluks' role in defending a besieged Islam in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, neither the *awlād al-nās* nor the Mamluk historians divulge any unusual insight into the Mamluk mentalities. The exceptions are Ibn al-Dawādārī in the fourteenth century and Ibn Taghrī Birdī in the fifteenth, who occasionally drop a hint on the significance of some Mamluk custom or action, and the peculiar and uncommonly revelatory but unfortunately incomplete chronicle of al-Yūsufī who apparently was a low-ranking yet highly opinionated local recruit in the *ḥalqa* in the entourage of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[10]

Otherwise, no identifiable Mamluk perspective emerges from the texts written by other Mamluks and sons of Mamluks. Why is unclear. One reason might be the desire of the two groups who were literary newcomers to identify with their local scholarly masters by adopting their dominant strategies of interpretation and by underplaying or omitting their Mamluk outlook from their writing.[11] The *awlād al-nās*'s attempt to join the literati's fellowship, nonetheless, was not always well received by the local literati. Ibn Taghrī Birdī in particular, probably because of his pomposity and propensity to correct his peers' interpretation of Turkish words, was put down by many chroniclers as both *ʿāmmī* (commoner) and ignorant as well as prejudiced to the Turks and, even a worth accusation, to the Copts.[12]

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[10] An insightful and singular chronicler, Mūsā b. Yaḥyā al-Yūsufī (1277–1358) wrote a history that apparently covered the reigns of fourteen Bahri sultans from Qalāwūn to Ḥasan in fifteen volumes. This history is now lost, except for the copious quotations taken from it by al-ʿAynī and others and the single volume discovered by Donald Little in the Ayasofya Library which covers only five years of al-Nāṣir's reign, see Donald Little, "The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahri Mamluk History: al-Yusufi's *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fi Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāsir*," *JAOS*, 94 (1974): 42–54. Al-Yūsufī's single volume is now published, though not by Little who nonetheless had stated in 1974 that he was preparing an edition of the manuscript. See Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fi Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Ahmad Hutayt (Beirut, 1986). It is strange, however, that the editor fails to credit Little with the discovery of the manuscript and identification of the author. Hutayt instead ascribes the discovery to his advisor, Ihsan ʿAbbas, and the identification of the author as al-Yūsufī to himself.

[11] See the discussion in U. Haarmann "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and their Sons in the Intellectual life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988): 81–114, esp. 82–85. In Baybars al-Manṣūrī's case in particular, another reason may be that he was accused of having used chancery *kuttāb* to compose his chronicles for him, which, if true, and that is impossible to prove, would explain the absence of clearly Mamluk insights in these works.

[12] al-Jawharī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥasr*, 175–82. It should be remembered, however, that the two were academic rivals in more than one way.

Misrepresenting, or even ignoring, the common people is to be expected. It is typical of pre-modern historiography everywhere, when only a privileged minority was literate and learned enough to engage in historical writing and interpretation. Medieval historians focused on dynasties, kings, and literati—which in the case of Muslims meant mainly the *ʿulamāʾ* of all specializations—to the exclusion of the lower classes who were seen as static, undifferentiated, and largely uninteresting. The few cases where a historian pays more than passing attention to the common people in general or a commoner in particular, such as in the extraordinary book by Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl ʿalā ʾl-Rawḍatayn*, are surprising, isolated, and unfortunately rare.[13] But a medieval historiography in which the ruling class from the monarch down has little control over whether and how it is represented, although not a uniquely Mamluk phenomenon, is unusual. It stems from the circumstances that governed the relationship between the military mamluks who made history and the literati who recorded it.[14]

Representing the Mamluks in Mamluk Historiography

In the Abbasid period, the mamluks and the literati were distinctly separate groups although over time they had developed a symbiosis from which they both benefited. In later regimes that used mamluks in their armies—especially the Seljuqs, Zangids, and Ayyubids—both mamluks and literati served the ruling dynasty or clan, and had equal access to power. Several of the literati, in fact, reached high positions, such as al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (1131–1199), Salāḥ al-Dīn's vizier, who helped shape the policies of his sultan and stirred him toward

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[13] *Al-Dhayl ʿalā ʾl-Rawḍatayn*, a combination chronicle and biographical dictionary in which his late-thirteenth-century author mixes the account of public events with the affairs of his private life, including his feelings and meditations upon the circumstances of some randomly encountered individuals, most of them common people. See Abū Shāma, Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, *al-Dhayl ʿalā ʾl-Rawḍatayn*, ed., M. Zahed al-Kawthari (Cairo: 1947); Louis Pouzet, "Abu Sama (599–665/1203–1268) et la société damascaine de son temps," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 37–38 (1985–86): 115–26; Joseph E. Lowry, "Time, Form and Self: The Autobiography of Abu Shama," *Edebiyat* 7:2 (Fall 1996): 313–25.

[14] U. Haarmann addressed several facets of the complex relationship between the Turks and the Arab literati, see his "Arabic in Speech," also "Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs—Changing *"ulamā"* Attitudes

the *jihād* against the Crusaders.[15] Some among the important literati even owned their own mamluks. The most notable case is that of Niẓām al-Mulk al-Ṭūsī (fl. 1063–92), the great vizier of Alp Arslān and Malikshāh. In his famous treatise on politics, *Siyāsat-Nāma*, he stressed the importance of employing mamluks in what had up to then been an army of mostly free-born horsemen. He also surrounded himself with an army of Turkish mamluks that numbered in the thousands. They were probably the reason why he kept his position for as long as he did in the treacherous Seljuq court.[16]

When the Mamluk regime took over in Egypt and Syria, however, it imposed new restrictions on the civilian élite that redefined the relationship between the mamluks and literati. It effectively barred the literati from attaining high political positions.[17] The army and, through it, all political power and its attendant financial and landholding prerogatives became the exclusive domain of the Mamluk class. This military aristocracy was closed to all but the mamluks (and, after the formative period, their sons or, in few cases, exceptional local recruits). Their clannish mentality, reinforced by linguistic and ethnic separation from the rest of the society, erected a regime that stressed exclusion and segregation as means of control. It was inscribed in particular nomenclature and insignia (*rank*) systems and in elaborate vestmental, dietary, musical, and ceremonial codes.[18]

Towards Mamluk Rule in the Late Fifteenth-Century," *Studia Islamica* 68 (1989): 61–79.

[15] E. Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade, Idéologie et Propagande dans les Réactions Musulmanes aux Croisades* (Paris, 1968), 67–70, 102–8; H. Dajani-Shakeel, *al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Baysānī al-ʿAsqalānī: Dawruhu al-Takhṭīṭi fi Dawlat Salāḥ al-Dīn wa Futūḥātuhu* (Beirut, 1993), 183–84, 217–22, 231–39.

[16] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-Nāma*, al-Sayyed al-ʿIzzawi trans. (Cairo, 1976); D. Ayalon, "The Mamluks of the Seljuks: Islam's Military Might at the Crossroads," *JRAS* (1996): 307–8.

[17] Immediately before the Mamluk rule in the Ayybid period, *'ulamā'* or their sons could attain high executive positions in the government and the army as illustrated by cases such as the four sons of Ṣadr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Hamawayh Shaykh al-Shuyūkh (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 18:121–22), Fakhr al-Dīn, ʿImād al-Dīn, Muʿīn al-Dīn, and Kamāl al-Dīn, who served the late Ayyubid princes (Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, i, 302, idem, *al Mawāʿiz wa-l-Iʿtibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭṭaṭ wa'l-Athār*, 2 vols. [Bulaq, 1854], ii, 33–34); one of them, Fakhr al-Dīn stopped wearing turban and wore the *sharbush* and *qubbāʿ*, or the *faqīh* ʿĪsā al-Hakkarī who was a great amir under both Nūr al-Dīn and Salāḥ al-Dīn as well as a religious scholar. On the high position of the civilian élite under Salāḥ al-Dīn and the Ayyubids in general, see R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193–1260*, (Albany, N.Y., 1977), 21–29, 377–80.

[18] For Mamluk dress codes see L.A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume; a Survey* (Geneva,

In the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, the literati appear to be a loosely defined and relatively open intermediate social group. They included, in addition to the traditional categories of *'ulamā'* and *kuttāb* who constituted by far their majority, three subcategories that were either new or particularly Egyptian or Mamluk in origin. The first were the *'ulamā'/kuttāb* who straddled both vocations and were a product of the officially sponsored madrasa system first introduced into Egypt under Salāḥ al-Dīn. The second were the Christian Coptic *kuttāb* and converts. They played an extremely important role in the administration of the Mamluk state, but from the standpoint of history writing, their contribution was minimal. The third subgroup, the *awlād al-nās*, was essentially a byproduct of the Mamluk caste's structure as a one-generation military aristocracy. The *awlād al-nās* were rarely recruited into the Mamluk army, at least until the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[19] Even after the changes instituted by al-Nāṣir allowed their promotion to high amirial levels, most *awlād al-nās* still belonged to the literati and chose, or were compelled to accept, a career in a religious or administrative field.

The literati formed groups that were based primarily on educational background, scholarly or chancery specialization, or *madhhab*. They shared the same general ethos, but had little practical sense of group solidarity aside from superficial signs such as dress codes and mannerisms of speech and conduct. The Mamluk regime permitted them little political role. But they dominated the production and transmission of knowledge in addition to the traditional religious functions held by the *'ulamā'*, which kept them in touch with the people and in a position to affect public opinion. They also controlled the judicial, administrative, educational, and waqf services through which they wielded tremendous influence as agents of medi-

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1952), 15–35 for the Mamluks, and 49–55 for the *'ulamā'*. For *rank*, see idem, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1938); M. Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 28 (1972): 213–87; E. Whelan, "Representations of the Khassakiyah and the Origins of Mamluk Emblems," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. P. Soucek (Philadelphia, 1988), 219–43.

[19] Promoting the Muslim-born sons of Mamluk amirs to high amiral positions seems to have begun under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but accelerated considerably after his death and during the turbulent reigns of his sons, especially under al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (1347–51, 1354–61), who used them expressly to counter the influence of the Mamluk amirs. See A. Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: the Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), 42–52.

ation and arbitration.[20] The Mamluks were thus compelled to patronize and employ them to manage the sultanate and maintain its religious, social, and fiscal systems. But they kept them under constant check enforced with the real threat of confiscation, arrest, and sometimes exceedingly brutal punishment.

This paradoxical situation affected the ways in which the literati saw their relationship with the Mamluk ruling class from whose ranks they were banished but to which they were financially, politically, and even existentially beholden. It translated into an attitude of uneasy acquiescence laced with jealousy and an affected haughtiness, that found their way into all genres of writing of the time, but especially historical/biographical texts.

The Mamluks were the rulers to fear and the patrons to please: they had to be presented in a positive light. The praise often comes across as transparently perfunctory, however, especially in the official, commissioned annals, such as the three encomia for Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Ashraf Khalīl written by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (1223–92), who held high chancery positions under all three.[21] More sincere and heartfelt were the representations of the Mamluks, particularly the founders from Quṭuz to al-Ashraf Khalīl, as the heroes of *jihād* who defended Islam against its enemies: the Crusaders, the Mongols, the Armenians, and some domestic splinter groups.[22] This loudly and justly celebrated achievement, however, did not obfuscate the frequent though prudently subdued discontent with the Mamluks as a ruling class. They were the manipulators of financial rewards and public office coveted by many literati, and, in the final account, the outsiders who seized and maintained power by force.

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[20] Chamberlain, *Knowledge*, 37–54, discusses these developments in Damascus.

[21] The three encomia are *al-Rawḍ al-Ẓāhir fi-Sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, ed. Abdulaziz Khuwayter (Riyadh, 1976); *Tashrīf al-Ayyām wa'l-ʿUṣūr fi-Sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murad Kamil (Cairo, 1961); *Al-Altāf al-Khāfiyya fi'l-Sīra al-Sharīfa al-Sulṭāniyya al-Malakiyya al-Ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg (Lund, 1902). The last two are incomplete. A short biography of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir in P.M. Holt, "The Virtuous Ruler in Thirteenth-Century Mamluk Royal Biographies" *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1980), 27–35; idem, "Three Biographies of al-Zahir Baybars," in ed. D.O. Morgan, *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), 19–29.

[22] Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade*, 165–180, discusses a number of themes found in Mamluk sources concerning the primacy of *jihad* but overstates, in my opinion, the propagandist intent of these writings. A keener, though unfortunately much shorter, analysis is Krawulsky, introduction to al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik*.

Thus, from the early days of the regime, the Mamluks' military and equestrian qualities were seen as both the source of their success and the tools of their coercion, and therefore grounds for both admiration and apprehension. The castigation became louder and more explicit in the fifteenth-century, when the mamluks began, for various reasons, to neglect their political and religious duties. Contemporary observers no longer saw them as the deserving leaders they had once been, skillfully and thoughtfully managing a great empire and fighting for the cause of Islam.[23]

Another set of mostly disparaging remarks turn up in the sources whenever the non-military qualities of the mamluks are discussed. Religious learning and literary and artistic talents—all trademarks of the literati—were also displayed by at least some of the Mamluk amirs and even simple soldiers. But when they were, the chroniclers either explained them away or diminished their value. A Mamluk might be mentioned as a composer of poetry in Arabic, for instance, but then he is either put down as "ignorant of the intricacies of the language," or described as "unusual among members of his race."[24] Phrases like these reflect the underlying belief that the Mamluks—because of their race and "natural" aversion to learn—were incapable of mastering the Arabic language and other intellectually demanding sciences. This view may also have represented an attempt to disqualify the Mamluks, and even the *awlād al-nās*, from attaining high rank in either religious sciences (*ʿilm*) or literature (*adab*). This would automatically insure that they could not encroach on the sacrosanct domain of the literati. Having been made to relinquish their political power to the mamluks, the literati were left with their religious, literary, and intellectual advantages. They could not entertain, let alone fully admit, even the slight possibility that the mamluks could also share in these privileges, which they were intent on protecting from any infiltration.

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[23] These are the words of al-Maqrīzī, a student of Ibn Khaldūn and one of the best critics of his age, who went on to satirize the Mamluks of his time as "more lustful than monkeys, more ravenous than rats, and more harmful than wolves," *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:214; see also Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, vii, 328–29, where he deplores the changes in the Mamluk army structure from the time of Qalāwūn and describes the mamluks of his time as "holding their buttocks in the water and their nose in the sky" (meaning that they were both impotent and arrogant). There is a tendency among the Burji historians to idealize the Bahri period, but as D. Ayalon ("Harb," *EI*^{2}, 3:189) remarks "this tendency is by no means without foundation."

[24] Examples provided in Haarmann "Arabic in Speech," 95–100.

The sociopolitical gap was widened by another source of separation between the Mamluks and their historians. This was language. The Mamluks spoke Turkish and sometimes colloquial Arabic; other ethnic groups among them, such as the Mongols, spoke their own native language as well.[25] When they did write, at first the Mamluks wrote mainly in Arabic and Qipchaq Turkish, later on they wrote in Arabic and Oghuz Turkish (called also Turkoman and later Ottoman).[26] Local literati spoke colloquial Arabic, perhaps in a more refined form than that used by the mamluks or the common people, and wrote only in classical Arabic, albeit in a prose that reveals the degree to which some vernacular expressions (such as *aysh* [what]) had penetrated even the highest literary and judicial language in the medieval period.

Two subgroups of the literati were native speakers of Turkish: the *awlād al-nās*, especially those whose mothers were also Turkish, and the Turkish Anatolian, Iraqi, and Azerbaijani literati who came to the Mamluk sultanate in the Burji period in search of employment and patronage.[27] Arab literati rarely tried to learn Turkish, possibly as a sign of alienation or contempt. Whenever an individual among them showed fluency in both Arabic and Turkish, the chroniclers seem to have been utterly surprised. Qāḍī Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm, known as Ibn Kātib Sunqur, is said by al-Ṣafadi (himself a member of the *awlād al-nās*) to "have [had] the gift of composing rhymed [Arabic] poetry almost effortlessly, although he speaks fluent Qipchaq Turkish,"[28] seemingly implying that the two skills are somehow incompatible. The polyglot *qāḍī* Ibrāhīm Jamal al-Kufāt, who served in

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[25] Yūsufī, *Nuzhat*, 329–30, notes that Qibjaq al-Manṣūrī and Aytamish al-Muḥammadī, both of Mongol extraction, spoke and wrote "Mongol." Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 224, mentions that when Barqūq's father, Anas, arrived in Cairo, they spoke in "Circassian," presumably not Oghuz Turkish, since Ibn Taghrī Birdī was a native Turkish speaker and he clearly did not understand Barqūq's speech.

[26] Haarmann "Arabic in Speech," 90–2; B. Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon, *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), 251. M. Shatzmiller, "The Crusades and Islamic warfare—a re-evaluation," *Der Islam* 69 (1992): 247–88, esp. 272–88, argues that the training manuals, all Mamluk and all written in Arabic, can be seen as a sign of the reintegration of the soldier in the cultural life of the thirteenth/fourteenth century.

[27] Flemming, "Literary Activities," 251–53.

[28] al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 15:341–42; he also cites an unusual poem composed by Ibn Kātib Sunqur in which he mixes Arabic and Turkish in describing a Turkish lover living in Cairo. al-Ṣafadī mentions only one famous precedent to this most unusual form of poetic composition.

the administration from the end of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign until his execution by al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl in 1344, was put in a class of his own because he spoke, beside flawless Turkish, two African languages, Takruri (of Takrur, present-day Chad and Mali) and Nubian.[29]

In the later, or Burji period, the historian Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī was noted for his fluency in both Arabic and Turkish, which he may have learned in his youth in ʿAynṭāb (Gaziantep in Turkey today), which had a sizable Turkoman community in the fourteenth century.[30] He is reported to have read his chronicle, *ʿIqd al-Jumān*, aloud to his patron, Sultan Barsbāy, and translated it into Turkish as he went along. Still, in the dignified custom of the time he published it only in Arabic, and apparently never recorded his Turkish translation despite the broadened audience such a translation would have provided, not to mention rewards from powerful Mamluk patrons. Only one late-Mamluk historian, to my knowledge, composed a history in Turkish. This was the *qāḍī al-jaysh* (*qāḍī* of the army) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aja (1417–76/7), who wrote a version of *Futūḥ al-Shām* of al-Wāqidī in Turkish, probably for his patron the great amir Yashbak min Mahdī, who was himself a learned man of diverse scholarly interests.[31]

The language barrier must have caused communication problems between the mamluks and the literati, although our chroniclers never speak of any.[32] They do, however, note that many key figures among the Mamluks, including Sultan Qalāwūn, barely spoke Arabic.[33] They even use a disparaging term, *ghutumī* (inarticulate or dumb), to describe

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[29] Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech," 92; Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-Awlādahu*, vol. 1, ed. Barbara Schäfer, (Wiesbaden, 1977), 275; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kamīna fi Aʿyān al-Miʾa al-Thamīna* 4 vols. (Hyderabad, 1929–32), 1:82; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 75–76.

[30] For al-ʿAynī, see W. Marçais, art "al-ʿAynī," *EI*[2], 1:790–91; for ʿAynṭāb see Ch. Pellat, art "ʿAyntab," *EI*[2], 1:791–92.

[31] Flemming, "Literary Activities," 255, n. 39, 40.

[32] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, a historian and member of the *awlād al-nās*, was belittled by other historians precisely for his alleged weak command of the Arabic language. He returned the favor by showing how senior scholars, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalāni, made mistakes because of their "ignorance of Turkish and unfamiliarity with Turkish customs," two drawbacks that he obviously did not suffer from, see *Nujūm*, vi, 555.

[33] In the case of Qalāwūn see, Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, i, 673 and 756. Amir Bashtāk also refused to speak Arabic, though the sources say that he knew it, and always used an interpreter in public, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 142; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 34; Harmann, *Quellenstudien*, 77, n. 2. Even Baybars, who apparently was fluent in Arabic, spoke in Turkish in some occasions, such as during a session in the Dār al-ʿAdl

those Mamluks who failed to learn proper Arabic.[34] But they do not tell us how they communicated with them and reported what they said. This raises serious questions about the veracity and authenticity of the numerous conversations between members of the Mamluk ruling class reported in the sources,[35] for they must have been originally spoken in Turkish (I doubt that any extensive dialogue was in colloquial Arabic).[36] This means that they had to be translated for the chroniclers who did not understand Turkish before they could be recorded in the form we have today. The rephrasing would surely have distorted their content and tone. Furthermore, the nuances, images, and figures of speech used by the Mamluks would also have been lost to us through translation, so that we will never be able to glimpse their world through their own words.

The problem, however, goes beyond the inability of most Mamluk historians to convey the content, tone, and nuances of dialogues said in Turkish accurately to what I think is deliberate misrepresentation. Many of the conversations between Mamluks reported in colloquial Arabic in the sources appear to be not translated, but rather fabricated, or at least edited and embellished.[37] This is not the common

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where he needed a translator to the Arabic for the judges present, see Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Ẓāhir*, 85 and n. 4.

[34] See Yūsufī, *Nuzhat*, 250 where a particularly vulgar and savage amir, Sayf al-Dīn al-Akuz, who was *mushshid al-dawāwīn* and the torture officer for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad admits being a *ghutumī* to emphasize his rudeness. Ulmas al-Ḥājib, a disreputable and altogether despicable amir, is also called *ghutumi*, see al–Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 371.

[35] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 224, raises the same question in refuting the reports by al-Maqrīzī and by Ibn Khatīb al-Nāṣiriyya (an Aleppine historian of the late fourteenth century) concerning the name of Barqūq. He notes that their chain of transmission starts with the slave-trader who brought Barqūq, ʿUthmān b. Musāfir, who did not speak a word of Arabic. Yet he allegedly communicated with their second transmitter, Burhān al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, who did not speak a word of Turkish.

[36] Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech," 91, n. 38. The exchange between Bahādur (Halawa) al-Ushāqī and Amir Tankiz (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 302–303) was not in Arabic as stated by Haarmann. It was in fact in Turkish as specified by al-Ṣafadī himself.

[37] Examples of discussions that were most likely fabricated abound. See for instance the numerous dramatic exchanges narrating how Qarāsunqur al-Jukandār and Aqush al-Afram and other amirs escaped from al-Nāṣir and took refuge in the Ilkhanid court of Abū Saʿīd in 1311 in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 331–33 for al-Afram, and ibid., xxiv, 217–20 for Qarāsunqur. Compare them with the discussion between Qabjaq al-Manṣūrī and the father of Ibn Faḍl Allah, where similar topoi are used in a similar context before Qabjaq's escape to the Ilkhanid Ghāzān in 1298, ibid., 24:181–82. See also the self-reflective remark attributed to Qawṣūn after Baktīmur al-Sāqī's

form of falsification where a historian twists, omits, or exaggerates a fact either to serve partisan ends or to please a patron or ward off his anger. Such a practice was current wherever historians had to work under the patronage of powerful politicians and noblemen, and it is not confined to Mamluk historians. Nor did the Mamluk historians invent or ornament these dialogues only to make their accounts more entertaining and attract a wider audience in a period noted for the profusion of historical writing with a popular bent.[38] The reason, I think, has primarily to do with the image of the Mamluks that our historians, as the representatives of the literati class, wished to project; an image, it has to be added, that was far from complimentary.

A glaring example of what I am describing can be found in a discussion that ostensibly took place between Bashtāk and Qawṣūn, the two competing great amirs and close confidants of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who were with him when he died.[39] The report transmitted by al-Ṣafadī begins by saying that Qawṣūn went to the window with its view overlooking Cairo and called Bashtāk to him for a confidential conversation. Qawṣūn claimed and ultimately managed to convince Bashtāk that since neither of them had a real chance to become sultan they had better stop plotting against each other. His argument was that neither of them was a real Mamluk: they had both started as petty peddlers, were noticed by al-Nāṣir primarily for their physical attractiveness, and were bought by him from one another when neither legally owned the other.

The reasons offered by Qawṣūn to dissuade Bashtāk from seeking the throne were both logical and convincing. I had even previously considered them of paramount importance in explaining the events that followed the death of the long-reigning and formidable

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death on the way back from the Hijaz, ibid., x, 196; or the long-distance exchange between the amirs Tāz and Baybughā Arus in the 1350s, ibid., xvi, 383–84. Another example is the story explaining the rift between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his older son Aḥmad, al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh*, 47–49.

[38] See U. Haarmann, "Auflösung und Bewahrung der klassischen Formen arabischer Geschichtsschreibung in der Zeit der Mamluken," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 121 (1971): 46–60, esp. 49. A succinct restating of Haarmann's historiographical observations appears in his review of B. Radtke, "Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung im Mittelalterlichen Islam", in *JAOS*, 115, (1995), 134.

[39] al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 143–44; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 35, and Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, x, 19–20, repeat al-Ṣafadī's story verbatim (al-Maqrīzī reports his source).

al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, when neither Bashtāk nor Qawṣūn—after he managed to eliminate Bashtāk—dared usurp the sultanate despite their power and cunning.[40] But now I think that the discussion was altogether fabricated, because of the circumstances of its occurrence, its content, and language. First, it is difficult, though not entirely impossible, to explain how it could have been transmitted to al-Ṣafadī when it had allegedly taken place in the sultan's chamber by his deathbed. Second, Qawṣūn's statement that al-Nāṣir bought him from Bashtāk contradicts what we know about how he became a mamluk. Al-Ṣafadī himself in his biography of Qawṣūn in the same book, *al-Wāfī bi'l-Wafiyyāt*, specifies that al-Nāṣir sent Qawṣūn's price to his brother Sūsūn back in the Crimea.[41] Other sources report the unusual procedure by which the Sultan bought Qawṣūn from himself.[42]

But the strongest refutation of the authenticity of this discussion is the language in which it is presented: a vernacular Arabic of the kind that was probably spoken among the lower classes in Cairo. Qawṣūn and Bashtāk would have spoken Turkish, since neither of them was really at home in Arabic, having learned it at a relatively late age.[43] Furthermore, the street dialect is interspersed now and then with incongruously high literary expressions, such as *mā yasaʿanā illā imtithāli amrihi* (we cannot but obey his order), that were not a typical part of that vernacular dialect.

Inserting dialogues in historical narrative is a known technique for lending an account an appearance of authenticity and immediacy. The more plausible the language and expressions used in these conversations, the more believable the account itself.[44] In the case of

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[40] See my "The Ideological Significance of the Dār al-ʿAdl in the Medieval Islamic Orient." *IJMES*, 27, 1 (February 1995): 3–28.

[41] al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 277.

[42] Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh*, 159–60; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 307–308.

[43] Qawṣūn was a young man around eighteen years of age when he arrived in Cairo in the company of Tulbiyya (?), the Mongol princess sent to al-Nāṣir from the Golden Horde court of Uzbek in 1320, see al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 307. Bashtāk was also from the Golden Horde. We do not know at what age he reached Cairo as a mamluk, but he probably was a young man as well. He was tutored by none other than Qawṣūn, before he became his main competitor for the sultan's favors, see Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh*, 219.

[44] Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 179–80, notes the tension between reporting events as they were spoken or recasting them in grammatically correct Arabic in Mamluk chronicles. He distinguishes between al-Maqrīzī who strove to maintain a high level Arabic throughout his text and Ibn al-Dawādārī who included lots of colloquialisms

the Qawṣūn/Bashtāk dialogue, Turkish would have been the most authentic. Al-Ṣafadī could have explained first that the exchange was originally in Turkish, since he himself spoke it fluently, then proceeded to translate it into the kind of classicizing Arabic he used in his writing. Instead, he chose to render it in an affected vernacular (presumably because he could not produce an exact imitation) in a way that suggests that these were the exact words of Qawṣūn and Bashtāk.

The puzzling question is why did al-Ṣafadī use this street vernacular in reporting a conversation between the two amirs when his standard conversation language was a more classicizing one? The answer, in my opinion, is that he wanted the dialect to carry more than the impression of familiarity with the protagonists and closeness to the event. He intended it to signify the uncouth and uncultivated mamluks, something akin to the way Hollywood films have German, Asian, or Arab villains speak in broken English to show their villainy rather than their unfamiliarity with the language (which they obviously would not have spoken to each other in the first place).

Al-Ṣafadī is not the only Mamluk historian to have used this literary device in his narrative. Others used it as well to reflect the contempt in which the literati held the mamluks.[45] We can sometime even sense the relish with which they twisted the tongues of their Mamluk protagonists and made them utter vulgar expressions.[46] This way the literati could mock the mamluks or put them down without running the risk of being detected and punished. Conversely, spoken words of the literati or of "pure" Arabs, such as ʿĪsā b. Muhannā, the famous Bedouin chief, are reported in grammatically correct, classicizing Arabic, even by chroniclers who otherwise record their own words in vernacular, such as al-Yūsufī.[47] The hostile relationship between the Mamluks and the literati, therefore, is not only

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either because he wanted to give it an authentic appearance or because he himself did not know better.

[45] See a contextualization of this contempt in Haarmann "Arabic in Speech," 81–85.

[46] A telling example is offered by Yūsufī, *Nuzhat*, 178, where a famously abusive officer uses the lowest dialectical curses in addressing a group of administrators. The sultan and his amirs did not understand the words and asked another administrator about their meanings. He feigned his ignorance of these words as well and said that he hears them spoken only by the riffraff.

[47] Yūsufī, *Nuzhat*, 199–207.

expressed in the representations of the Mamluks made by the literati in the sources. It is also often inscribed in their words which are in turn encoded with opposing values. Dialogues in classical Arabic seem to imply culture and learning or to designate a native Arabic speaker, both seen as positive values; speech in the vernacular denotes either an uneducated or a foreign speaker, and conveys a sense of derision and insolence.

Thus, the binary image of the Mamluks as valiant defenders of Islam or rapacious exploiters of their subjects, often encountered in historical texts and emphasized in modern histories, represents only two facets of a complex portrayal by the literati. These two aspects were dampened and occasionally undermined by sometimes equally essentializing, sometimes subtler representations, distortions, and even downright omissions. The whole tells us more about the literati and their mixed and shifting feelings towards the Mamluks than it does about the Mamluks, their culture, or their views of themselves. This conclusion, elementary as it may seem from a post-structuralist perspective, has rarely been discussed or taken into account in contemporary Mamluk studies, even by those concerned with cultural and social questions.[48]

[48] Clifford, "*Ubi Sumus?*" exempts only two Mamluk historians, I. Lapidus and M. Chamberlain, from his general conclusion that Mamluk historical studies have failed to develop adequate theoretical and interpretive frameworks.

L'ÉVOLUTION DE LA COMPOSITION DU GENRE DE KHIṬAṬ EN ÉGYPTE MUSULMANE

Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid

L'art de la présentation topographique d'une ville, bien qu'il ait été pratiqué dans d'autres pays musulmans, a connu un developpement particulier en Égypte. En effet on trouve dans les introductions des ouvrages tels que le *Ta'rīkh Baghdad* d' al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, le *Ta'rīkh Dimashq* d'Ibn ʿAsākir et *al-Aʿlāq al-Khaṭīra fī dikr umarā' al-Shām wa'l-Jazīra* d'Ibn Shaddād des descriptions topographiques de ces villes, mais ce sont des témoignages limités, alors que pour l'Égypte, il est possible de suivre l'évolution topographique de la capitale dans le détail, grâce à d'excellents historiens et topographes comme: al-Kindī, Ibn Zūlāq, al-Quḍāʿī, al-Sharīf al-Juwwānī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, Ibn al-Mutawwaj, Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Abī'l-Surūr al-Bakrī, al-Jabartī et ʿAlī Mubārak.

Ce phénomène apparaît de la façon la plus évidente dans l'œuvre maîtresse de l'historien al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiz wa'l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-athār* qu'on l'appelle habituellement par l'un des termes de son titre *al-Khiṭaṭ*.

Les premières descriptions de la capitale de l'Égypte

Dans l'introduction de cet ouvrage al-Maqrīzī a cité les historiens et les topographes qui l'ont précédé dans ce genre, les remplace chronologiquement en rapport avec les crises ayant affectée l'Égypte et surtout sa capitale[1]. Bien que al-Maqrīzī écrit que le premier qui a décrit du façon systhématique la topographie de l'Égypte et ses monuments était Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kindī[2] (d. 350/961) nous savons que Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam mourut cent ans avant al-Kindī en 257/870 a

[1] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiz wa'l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-athār*, 2 tomes (Būlāq 1853), i, 4–5.

[2] al-Maqrīẓī, *al-Mawāʿiz*, i, 5.

consacré une chapitre dans son ouvrage *Futūḥ Miṣr wa akhbāruha* pour décrire les *khiṭaṭs* du Fusṭāṭ, Gīza et Alexendrie[3].

L'ouvrage d' al-Kindī ne nous est pas parvenu, ainsi que plusieurs autres de ses oeuvres. Le seul ouvrage qui nous soit arrivé d' al-Kindī est son histoire des Gouverneurs et des Juges (*Kītāb al-wulāt wa'l-quḍāt*) dont Ruven Guest a donné une édition critique en 1912. Cet ouvrage nous permet de mesurer l'étendue des emprunts que al-Maqrīzī a fait à cet auteur dans ses *khiṭat*. D'autre part les différent ouvrages d' al-Kindī ont été utilisés par al-Maqrīzī d'une façon très inégales, et l'on peu se demander si certains d'entre eux n'étaient pas perdus déjà à l'époque où écrivait l'auteur des *khiṭaṭ*[4].

Parmi ses œuvres qui traitent de la topographie de *Fusṭāṭ, Akhbār masjid ahl al-rāya al-aʿzam* dont al-Maqrīzī s'est référé à deux reprises dans son chapitre sur la mosquée de ʿAmr[5].

Les descriptions des premières *khiṭaṭs* Fusṭāṭ chez al-Maqrīzī sont évidément empruntée au *Kītāb al-khiṭaṭ* d' al-Kindī, elles n'ont pourtant pas été copiées sur l'original, mais bien d'après l'ouvrage d' al-Quḍāʿī, qui est expressément nommé, et qui fut utilisé encore pour ses contemporaines: al-Qalqashandī et Ibn Duqmāq[6].

C'est surtout dans l'histoire des gouverneurs de l'Égypte *Wulāt Miṣr* d' al-Kindī que al-Maqrīzī a prit des longs emprunts. Gaston Wiet a prouvé que plus de la moitié de l'ouvrage a été copié mot à mot, c'est-à-dire une trentaine des grandes pages de l'édition de Būlāq, sans que la plupart du temps le nom d' al-Kindī soit cité[7].

La capitale de l'Égypte au temps des Fatimides

C'est deux auteurs (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam et al-Kindī) se sont intéressés à la ville de Fusṭāṭ et à quelques autres villes égyptiennes. Mais avec l'arrivée des Fatimides au pouvoir en Égypte et leur construction de la ville du Caire en 358/969, l'intérêt pour la topographie et les édifices construits dans la nouvelle capitale s'accroît considérablement. Le premier auteur fatimide à en traiter fut Abū Muḥammad

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[3] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawaʿiẓ*, ii, 282.
[4] Wiet, G., "Kindī et Maqrīzī," *BIFAO* XII (1918), p. 62.
[5] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 246 l. 18; 247 l. 37.
[6] Wiet, G., "Kindī et Maqrīzī," 63.
[7] *Ibid.*, 61–73.

al-Ḥasan b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn connu sous le nomn d'Ibn Zūlāq[8] (d. 386/996), malheureusement son livre est perdu ainsi que plusieurs autres de ses œuvres.

Durant le premier siècle de l'histoire fatimide en Égypte, le Caire n'était qu'une résidence califale habitée par l'élite et considérée comme la capitale administrative et militaire du régime fatimide; tandis que la capitale – métropole de l'Égypte, où résidait le peuple, demeura toujours l'ancienne capitale *Miṣr al-Fusṭāṭ* le centre commercial, social et artisanal. C'est ainsi que les historiens et les topographes contenuent à décrire la ville de *Miṣr al-Fusṭāṭ* comme le prince al-Mukhtār ʿIzz al-Mulk Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Musabbiḥī (d. 420/1029) l'auteur du livre intitulé *Akhbār Miṣr*, un des sources les plus importantes des premières cinquante années de l'État fatimide en Égypte. Seul un petit fragment comprent quelques mois de l'année 414/1023–24 et la majeur partie de l'année 415/1024–25 nous a parvenu. D'après ce fragment et ce qui se trouve chez les compilateurs tardifs – surtout al-Maqrīzī – on remarque que al-Musabbiḥī s'interésse plus à *Fusṭāṭ* où il a vécu la majeure partie de sa vie[9].

À l'époque du calife al-Mustanṣir, le voyageur persan Nāṣir-i Khusrau à visité l'Égypte entre les années 439–442/1048–1050 et a décrit dans son relation de voyage appellé *Safarnāma*, entre autres, la capitale de l'Égypte (le Caire et Fusṭāṭ). Ce fut la première source qui nous donne davantage de détails sur les différents *ḥāra* (quartiers) du Caire, ses portes et la grand palais fatimide, de même il a décrit la grande mosquée de Fusṭāṭ, ses marchés et les cérémonies qui ont déroulé à l'époque[10].

À la même époque remonte la source la plus importante utilisée par les compilateurs tardifs pour décrire les premiers *khiṭat* de Fusṭāṭ, l'ouvrage du Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Salāma al-Quḍāʿī (d. 454/1062) intitulé *al-Mukhtār fī dikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-athār* largement utilisé par al-Maqrīzī et ses contemporaines. Al-Maqrīzī signale que "la plupart des monuments qu'il mentionne ont disparu, et il ne reste plus que des ruines et des places désertes. Ce desastre fut la

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[8] Sur cet auteur voir Gottheil, R., "Al-Hasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Zūlāq," *JAOS*, 28 (1907), pp. 254–270; Sezgin, F., *GAS* I, 359; *EI2*, art. *Ibn Zulaq*, iii, 1003.

[9] *Tome quarantième de la chronique d'Égypte de Musabbiḥī*, édité et présenté par A. Fuʿad Sayyid et T. Bianquis, (Le Caire 1978).

[10] Schefer, Ch., *Relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau*, Paris 1881; *Safarnemeh*, traduction arabe par Yahya al-Hassab, (Le Caire 1946, Beirut 1972).

conséquence des annés de misère du régne d' al-Mustansir de 457 à 464, pendant lesquelles sévirent la disette et la peste".[11]

Cette grande calamité qui dépeupla toute l'Égypte, atteignit sévèrement les anciens quartiers ʻabbasides et toulounides au nord de Fusṭāṭ. L'*amīr al-juyūsh* Badr al-Jamālī, celui qui a mit fin à l'anarchie qui régnait à l'époque, permit à tout ceux qui voulurent bâtir au Caire d'employer les matériaux des maisons desertées à la suite de la mort de leurs propriétaires. Al-Maqrīzī écrit: "Ce fut la première fois que le peuple bâtit au Caire"[12]; c'est ainsi que le Caire perdit son caractère de ville offïcielle.

Ainsi, selon al-Maqrīzī, al-Kindī et al-Quḍāʿī ont décrit Fusṭāṭ avant la grande crise d' l'époque d' al-Mustanṣir et, après leur mort, dit-il "la plus grande partie de ce qu'ils avaient décrit fut anéanti"[13].

Celui qui a composé dans la genre des *khiṭaṭs* après al-Quḍāʿī fut son disciple Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Barakāt b. Hilāl al-Naḥwī mort centenaire en 520/1126, qui écrit un œuvre intéressante intitulé *Khiṭaṭ Misr*. Al-Maqrīzī la commente en ces termes: "c'est une œuvre érudite où il attire l'attention du vizir al-Afḍal fïls de Badr al-Jamālī sur les lieux constitués en waqfs, puis saisis par les particuliers"[14].

Le dernier auteur de la topographie à l'époque fatimide fut le généalogiste shiʿite bien connu Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Asʿad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn connu sous le nom d'al-Sharïf al-Juwwānī (d. 588/1092). Il fut *naqīb al-ashrāf*, c'est-à-dire représantant des descendants de la famille du Prophète en Égypte, et l'auteur du livre intitulé *al-Nuqaṭ li muʿjam mā ushkila min al-khiṭaṭ*; al-Maqrīzī écrit qu'"il attiré l'attention sur des édifïces disparus et des vestiges anéantis"[15].

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Lorsque al-Maqrīzī décrit le palais fatimide, il tire ses renseignements pour le cerémonial palatin et le plan interne du palais des historiens Ibn al-Ma'mūn et Ibn al-Ṭuwayr[16]. De toute façon, le peu

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[11] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, i, 5.
[12] *Ibid.*, i, 5.
[13] *Ibid.*, i, 5.
[14] *Ibid.*, i, 5.
[15] *Ibid.*, i, 5.
[16] *Passages de la chronique d'Égypte d'Ibn al-Ma'mūn*, édités et presentés par A. Fuʿad

de personnes qui eurent le privilège de pénétrer dans le palais et qui le décrivirent, étaient soit des voyageurs comme Nāṣir-i Khusrau (dont la description est peu clair)[17], soit des ambassadeurs tels que les deux envoyés du roi Amaury Ier de Jérusalem qui, eux, en ont donné une description exhaustive. Cette description nous est parvenue par les écrits de Guillaume de Tyr, mais rien ne prouve qu'il fut l'un des deux ambassadeurs[18]. D'autre part les voyageurs qui ont visité l'Égypte au temps des Fatimides ont plutôt décrit la ville d'*al-*Fusṭāṭ et non la ville du Caire. De même Umayya b. Abī'l-Ṣalt, qui visita l'Égypte ou début du VIe/XIIe siècle, et le géographe al-Idrīsī qui a rédigé son ouvrage *Nuzhat al-mushtāq* vers la fīn de l'époque fatimide sans venir en Égypte, non absolument pas mentionné la ville du Caire.

La disparition des sources de l'époque fatimide

La plupart des sources qui ont été écrite à l'époque fatimide ont disparu aujourd'hui. Cependant, un grand nombre d'entre elles existait du temps d'al-Maqrīzī et ses contemporains au IXe/XVe siècle qui les ont utilisées largement dans leurs ouvrages. Ces sources ont été détruites plus tard, sans doute par négligence et par manqe d'intérêt pour l'histoire à l'époque ottomane, que l'historien égyptien al-Jabartī écrit, au début du XIXe siècle, que "Al-Maqrīzī cite des noms d'ouvrages que nous n'avons vus nulle part, tels que l'histoire d'Ibn Abī Ṭayy celle d'al-Musabbiḥī, Ibn al-Ma'mūn, Ibn Zūlāq et d'al-Quḍāʿī"[19].

Nous dépendons donc des informations sur les premières *khiṭaṭ*-s de la capitale égyptienne des historiens et topographes tels que Ibn Muyassar, Ibn Saʿīd, al-Nuwayrī, Ibn Aybak, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī et Abū'l Maḥāsin Ibn Taghrī Birdī . . . qui sont tous des historiens de l'époque mamelouke qui ont compilé des sources datant des Fatimides et des Ayyoubides.

Sayyid, (Le Caire, 1983); Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī ahkbār al-dawlatayn*, texte établi et commenté par A. Fuʿad Sayyid, (Beirut-Stuttgart 1992).

[17] Voir *supra* n. 10.

[18] Schlumberger, G., *Campagnes du Roi Amaury Ier de Jérusalem en Égypte au XIIe siècle*, (Paris 1906).

[19] al-Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib al-athār fi'l-tarājim wa'l-ahkbār*, (Būlāq 1297 H.), i, 5.

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Tout au long de l'époque fatimide le Caire ne fut qu'une enceinte impériale interdite où se trouvait le palais du calife, les casernes de l'armée et le siège du gouvernement fatimide, alors que Fusṭāṭ demeurait la capitale métropole, le principal entrepôt et le plus grand port fluvial de l'Égypte. Mais après la prise du pouvoir par les Ayyoubides en Égypte en 567/1171, la ville du Caire a perdu beaucoup de son rayonnement et devenue une ville populeuse, centre des activités artisanales et commerciales, surtout après la construction de la citadelle du Caire sur les hauteurs du Muqaṭṭam et le transfert final du siège du gouvernement vers elle en 604/1207. Elle resta le centre du pouvoir jusqu'aux temps mamelouks, et dont l'histoire là encore est inséparable de celle des sultans.

La capitale à l'époque ayyoubide

À lépoque ayyoubide on ne rencontre pas des auteurs qui s'interessent à la topographie de la capitale égyptienne. Mais, il nous a parvenu de cette époque un ouvrage d'un auteur copte qui traite des couvents des églises de l'Égypte et de la topographie des quartiers coptes de la capitale. Cet ouvrage fut attribué autrefois à un certain Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armannī (l'arménien)[20], mais selon un manuscrit recemment découvert nous savons que l'auteur de ce livre intitulé *Ta'rīkh al-kanā'is wa'l adyira* fut Abū'l-Makārim Saʿdallāh b. Jirjis b. Masʿūd qui a vécu en Égypte au début de l'époque ayyoubide[21].

De même, al-Sharīf Abū Gaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥusaynī al-Idrīsī (d. 649/1251) mentionne dans son ouvrage *Anwār ʿulwiyyī al-ajrām fī'l-kashf ʿan asrār al-Ahrām*, en décrivant l'itinéraire qui conduisait aux Pyramides, une grande partie de la topographie de la ville du Caire au delà de la porte du Bāb Zuwayla jusqu'à

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[20] *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some Neighbouring Countries attributed to Abū Ṣāliḥ the Armenian*, edited and translated by B.T.A. Evetts with added notes Alfred J. Butler (Oxford 1895).

[21] Iscarous, T., "Un nouveua manuscrit sur les églises et monastères de l'Égypte au XII[ème] siècle" dans *Congrès International de Géographie* – avril 1925. (Le Caire 1926), V, pp. 207–208. Il fut édité par Sammuel le Syrien au Caire en 1984 sous le titre de *Tarīkh al-kanā'is wa'l-adyira fī'l qarn al-thānī ʿashar*.

la rive est du Nil en face de la Miqyās (Nilomètre) du Rawḍa[22].

Les voyageurs orientaux et occidentaux qui avaient visité l'Égypte à l'époque ayyoubide nous ont laissé des importantes descriptions de la capitale de l'Égypte à cette époque, tel que Ibn Jubayr, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī et Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī.

La capitale à l'époque mamelouke

Les mamelouks avaient pris le pouvoir en Égypte en même temps que Bagdad, la capitale ʿabbaside a été pris par les Mongols en 656/1258. C'est ainsi que le Caire devenu à cette époque la principale ville du monde musulman, le pôle d'attraction politique et culturel de ce monde et la capitale du sultanat mamelouk qui étend sa domination sur l'Égypte et le Croissant fertile jusqu'à l'Euphrate.

Sous les Mamelouks, surtout à l'époque du sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, le Caire avait connu son extrême extension au moyen-âge. Au début de cette époque le *qāḍī* Muḥyi'l-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1293) fut le premier auteur qui a consacré un ouvrage à la description topographique du Caire intitulé *al-Rawda al-bahiyya al-zāhira fī khiṭaṭ al-muʿizziya al-Qāhira*. Al-Maqrīzī écrit "qu'il comble par là une lacune importante"[23]. Cet ouvrage largement utilisé par al-Maqrīzī et les grands compilateurs du IXe/XVe siècle nous rend facilement conclure que son auteur était un archéologue doublé d'un historien. L'historien Ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī (d. a. 736/1336) dit avoir trouvé le premier autographe de ce livre composé en 647/1249[24]. Il résume une partie d'une façon non ordonnée dans son livre intitulé *Kanz al-durar wa jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, il ajoute qu'il a eu l'intention de rédiger une description topographique du Caire plus complète dont il consignera des renseignements inédits[25], mais il paraît qu'il ne put jamais achever sa rédaction.

D'autre part, l'ouvrage d'Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir semble été perdu jusqu'à que j'ai trouvé un manuscrit apographe conservé à la British

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[22] Haarmann, U., *Das Pyramidenbuch des Abū Ǧaʿfar al-Idrīsī*, (Beirut-Stuttgart 1992), 51–56.

[23] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, i, 5.

[24] Ibn Aybak, *Kanz al-durar wa jāmiʿ al-ghurar* t. vi, ed. by Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, (Cairo 1960), 137, 140.

[25] Ibn Aybak, *Kanz*, vii, ed. by Saʿid ʿAbdul-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr, (Le Caire 1972), 18.

Library sous le nº Or. 13317, dont j'ai donné recemment une édition critique[26]. Cet ouvrage fut la source de base d'après laquelle al-Maqrīzī et Ibn Taghrī Birdī avaient empruntées leurs descriptions des *ḥāra*-s du Caire surtout à l'époque fatimide et post-fatimide. De même, ses renseignements sur la citadelle du Caire que lui avaient empruntées al-Maqrīzī et al-Qalqashandī forment la base principale des études qui a consacré Casanova à cette œuvre militaire des Ayyoubides[27].

La comparaison du seul manuscrit conservé de cet ouvrage avec les compilations qui se trouvent chez al-Maqrīzī et ses contemporains, nous amène à conclure que ces auteurs avaient en leurs possessions une deuxième version plus complète que celle qui nous est conservé. C'est ainsi que j'ai eu l'intention de donner une édition aussi complet que possible du texte d'Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir en comblant la lacune du seul manuscrit qui nous est parvenir.

Quoique la ville du Caire a connu son extrême extension sous le sultanat d'al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (693–741/1293–1341) et sa population devint telle que la ville et ses faubourgs peuvent à grand peine contenir ses habitants, on trouve des écrivains qui continu à décrire la ville du *Fusṭāṭ* comme le *qādī* Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. al-Mutawwaj (d. 730/1330) qui a écrit son *Īqāz al-mutaghaffil wa ittiʿāz al-Muta'ammil* où il donne un aperçu sur la situation générale de *Miṣr al-Fusṭāṭ* et sur sa topographie jusqu'à l'année 720/1319. Les localités qu'il décrit furent détruites pour la plupart lors des épidémies de 749/1348, 761/1360 et la flambée des prix de 776/1375[28]. Le Caire, *Miṣr al-Fusṭāṭ* et le pays en entier furent dévastés par les événements et les catastrophes de 806/1403. Après cette date, Le Caire, Fustat et la plupart des villes de l'Égypte furent durablement ruinées. C'est à cette époque que al-Maqrīzī composa ses *khiṭaṭ*-s.

Ibn al-Mutawwij, l'auteur du *Īqāz al-mutaghaffil*, fut toujours selon al-Maqrīzī, le dernier auteur à avoir illustré la topographie de Fusṭāṭ avant lui. Donc il passe sous silence l'œuvre de son maître Ibrāhīm b. Aydumur al-ʿAlā'ī connu sous le nom d'Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1406)

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[26] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya al-zāhira fi khiṭaṭ al-muʿizziyya al-Qāhira*, texte édité et présenté par Ayman Fuʿad Sayyid, (Beirut 1996).

[27] Casanova, P., *Histoire et description de la Citadelle du Caire*, MMAFC VII (1892), pp. 509–781.

[28] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, i, 5.

et son voisin Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. Tujān al-Awḥadī (d. 811/1408). Le premier rédigé un œuvre intitulé *al-Intiṣār li wāṣiṭat ʿiqd al-amṣār*. De cet ouvrage, qui n'était pas connu que par le titre mentionné chez Ḥajjī Khalīfa, on a découvrit dans la mosquée al-Fakhrī au Caire en l'année 1891 un manuscrit autographe contenant seulement les volumes IV et V. Le tome IV presente la Haute-Égypte et surtout sa capitale Fusṭāṭ-Miṣr, tandis que le tome V présente la Basse-Égypte et la capitale du pays Le Caire, dont Carl Vollers a donné une édition médiocre l'année suivante[29].

Vollers et Casanova ont tenté d'expliquer le titre de cet ouvrage et son insertion dans une série, probablement jamais réalisée, de descriptions d'autres contrées du monde musulman. Pour Sylvie Denoix, qui a étudié l'ouvrage d'Ibn Duqmāq, les tomes manquants du *Kitāb al-intiṣār* ont été aussi une fresque historique présentant l'Égypte dans sa marche vers la révélation[30].

La date à laquelle cet ouvrage a été rédigé, dont l'état actuel de nos connaissances, doit situer entre 796/1394 et 804/1401 date du restauration de la mosquée de ʿAmr faite par le sultan Faraj b. Barqūq[31].

Comme on a déjà vu, la littérature de *khiṭaṭ* – dont relève l'œuvre d'Ibn Duqmāq comme celle de al-Maqrīzī – consistant en une description de topographie historique appartient à une tradition littéraire particulièrement féconde en Égypte. L'un et l'autre se situent dans une chaîne d'auteurs auquels ils empruntent éventuellement des passages de leurs textes. Dans une période de boulversements comme celle qu'ils vivent, le recours à ces autorités anciennes prend une signification particuliaire. Il est d'ailleurs symptomatique que al-Maqrīzī, en présentant les auteurs qui l'ont précédé dans ce genre, les replace chronologiquement en rapport avec les crises ayant affecté l'Égypte et surtout sa capitale, comme si cette necessité de fixer par écrit un état des lieux avaient toujours été dictée par le sentiment d'être parmi les derniers témoins de leur existence.

Fusṭāṭ occupe la place la plus importante du livre d'Ibn Duqmāq, elle est l'objet principal de son investigation, la place du Caire y est d'ailleurs incroyablement réduite, non seulement elle vient après

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[29] *Description de l'Égypte par Ibn Doukmak*, publiée par K. Vollers d'après le manuscrit autographe conservé à la bibliothèque khédiviale, (Le Caire 1893).

[30] Denoix, S., *Décrire le Caire, Fusṭāṭ-Miṣr d'après Ibn Duqmāq et Maqrīzī*, (Le Caire 1992), 14.

[31] *Ibid.*, 12.

Fusṭāṭ et occupe à peine trois pages, mais encore, le seul chapitre constitué de notices qui lui soit consacré s'intitule *Dhikr al-khiṭaṭ bi'l-Qāhira*. Ibn Duqmāq emploie donc pour parler d'un élément urbain cairote, un mot appartenant à la terminologie spécifique de Fusṭāṭ. En effet, il s'agit ici des *ḥāra*-s du Caire[32].

Selon Salmon, qui a étudié le vaste espace compris entre le Caire des Fatimides et Fusṭāṭ, "le livre d'Ibn Duqmāq est le meilleur guide pour la reconstitution topagraphique du Fusṭāṭ, d'al-Askar et d'al-Qaṭā'i'"[33]. De même Casanova, en lisant Ibn Duqmāq, réalisé qu' "on pouvait faire avec son aide une description très précise de la ville de Fusṭāṭ"[34].

Le volume III de l'ouvrage du contemporain d'Ibn Duqmāq et de al-Maqrīzī, Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) intitulé *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshā* contient un important chapitre sur la topographie du Fusṭāṭ, du Caire et la description de la citadelle du Caire où il a recours à plusieurs auteurs antérieurs[35].

Le Caire du Maqrīzī

La litterature des *khiṭat*-s du Caire atteigne son apogée avec l'œuvre maîtresse de al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441), *al-Mawāʿiz wa'l-i ʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-athār*[36]. Quatremère et Margoliouth affirment q'aucune autre ville orientale ne peu se vanter d'avoir été l'objet d'une description topographique comme celle du *Khiṭat*[37]. C'est en effet, le texte le plus important et le plus complet que nous ayons sur l'histoire et la topographie de l'Égypte musulmane. Il s'agit d'une description à la fois géographique et historique du pays, où, après une présentation de l'Égypte et des villes de province, qui occupe environ le quart de l'ouvrage, l'étude se concentre sur l'agglomération urbaine cairote, ce pôle du monde musulman de l'époque. Dans cette par-

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[32] Denoix, *Décrire*, 17–18.

[33] Salmon, G., *Etudes sur la topographie du Caire – la kalʿat al-kabch et la Birkat al-Fil*, (Le Caire 1902), 2.

[34] Casanova, P., *Essai de reconstitution topographique de la ville d'al-Foustât ou Miṣr*, (Le Caire 1913–19), 7.

[35] al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshā*, (Le Caire 1938), iii, 325–375.

[36] Elle fut publiée en deux volumes à Būlāq en 1853; J'ai donné recemment une édition critique du manuscrit autographe du livre, (London 1995).

[37] Qatremère, *Journal des Savants* (1856), 326; Krachkovski, I., *Taʾrīkh al-adab al-jughrafī al-ʿarabī*, (Le Caire 1963), 482.

tie al-Maqrīzī nous donne un tableau d'ensemble sur la fondation et l'évolution des capitales de l'Égypte depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'au IX^{e}/XV^{e} siècle. Il fournit un inventaire détaillé des palais, des mosquées, des couvents, des pavillons, des quartiers, des bains et des caravansérails se trouvant dans la capitale de l'Égypte à travers neuf siècles.

De même, al-Maqrīzī nous donne une description du dernier centre urbain, la citadelle construite par Saladin qui restée le centre du pouvoir jusqu'aux temps mamelouks.

Cette remarquable description de la métropole égyptienne s'achève par une présentation des mosquées, des madrasas, de tous les édifices culturels et jusqu'aux cimetières, le lieu de pélerinage célébre dans le monde musulman. Cet inventaire et ces remarques reposent essentiellement sur les observations personnels de al-Maqrīzī et sur des sources contemporaines qui ne nous sont malheureusement pas parvenues.

Cette œuvre à été écrite à un moment crucial de l'histoire de l'Égypte: la période de la transition entre la dynastie mamelouke turque et la dynastie circassienne dont al-Maqrīzī vivra presque la moitié. Ce temps a été de sombres périodes pour l'Égypte. Un appauvrissement général a commencé, dû sans doute aux famines et aux épidémies qui va se poursuivre pendant bien longtemps. Au début du IX^{e}/XV^{e} siècle, la reprise de l'avance mongole, qui, avec Tamerlan, arrive jusqu'à Damas, les luttes internes entre les classes mameloukes sous le sultanat d'al-Nāṣir Faraj plus la famine du 806/1403 et la peste du 808/1405, tout cela fait de cette époque l'une des plus noires de toute l'histoire de l'Égypte. Il semble que l'ouvrage de *khiṭat* de al-Maqrīzī ait été essentiellement écrit juste après cette crise entre 818/1415 et 827/1424. Donc, "il peut paraître paradoxal", écrit J.-Cl. Garcin, "de chercher dans l'œuvre de al-Maqrīzī l'évocation de la grandeur d'une ville dont il n'a connu surtout que la ruine"[38].

Nous savons que le contemporain de al-Maqrīzī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Awḥadī (d. 811/1408) a rédigé un brouillon du manuscrit sur les *khiṭat*-s du Caire. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī et son disciple immédiat al-Sakhāwī ont formellement accusé al-Maqrīzī de l'avoir mis au net, puis de se l'être attribué après y avoir fait un

[38] Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr* (éd. Ḥ. Ḥabashī), ii, 406; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmiʿ*, i, 359.

certain nombre d'additions[39]. Al-Maqrīzī cite dans son ouvrage les sources dont il s'est inspiré et ne cite pas ni son maître Ibn Duqmāq ni son voisin al-Awḥadī.

Al-Maqrīzī fut le disciple d'Ibn Duqmāq, il ne serait pas étonnant qu'il ait bien connu ses ouvrages; mais il ne reproduit explicitement aucun texte de lui. Kratchkovski pense qu'il est possible que al-Maqrīzī ait sciemment omis de mentionner le livre d'Ibn Duqmāq parcequ'il était un chafiʿite exalté alors que ce dernier était un fervent hanafīte[40]. De toute façon le texte d'Ibn Duqmāq manque de clarté et de points d'orientation; et bien que les renseignements topographiques de al-Maqrīzī sur Fusṭāṭ soient un peu confus sur quelques points, ils apportent des détails négligés par Ibn Duqmāq, spécialement sur les limites de la ville et ses rapports avec le Caire, comme s'il disposait de sources meilleures.

Bien que al-Maqrīzī ne mentionne pas al-Awḥadī parmi les auteurs des khiṭaṭs dans l'introduction de son livre, il le loue cependant, soulignant sa connaissance de cette discipline quant il rédigea sa biographie dans son livre *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda.* En effet il écrit:

"Jai beaucoup profīté de lui en ce qui concerne l'histoire, Dieu m'a aidé par des autographes de lui concernant la topographie du Caire que j'ai inclu mon livre "*al-Mawāʿiz wa'l-iʿtibār*"[41].

C'est une reconnaissance formelle de al-Maqrīzī qu'il a profīté du brouillon de son voisin al-Awḥadī. L'honnêteté scientifīque demandé de al-Maqrīzī de le citer au moins dans son introduction parmi ce qui sont composé dans le genre de *khiṭaṭ.*

Les ouvrages des khiṭaṭ-s après al-Maqrīzī

Les ouvrages de *khiṭaṭ* après al-Maqrīzī n'ont pas la même valeur que ceux de al-Maqrīzī et de ses prédécesseurs. Après la conquête ottomane, l'Égypte perd sa prédominance politique. Le Caire change: autrefois capitale d'un puissant état, elle n'est plus désormais qu'une ville secondaire dans l'immense Empire ottoman. Les auteurs se contentent de reprendre l'œuvre de al-Maqrīzī n'ajoutant rien de nouveau jusqu'à l'èpoque de ʿAlī Mubārak.

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[39] Garcin, J.-Cl., "Al-Maqrīzī, un historien encyclopédique du monde afro-oriental," *Les Africains* LX (Paris 1978), pp. 210–211.

[40] Krachkovski, *Taʾrīkh*, 472.

[41] al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda*, éd. Muḥammad Kamāl ʿIzz al-Dīn, (Beirut 1992), i, 233.

Des auteurs comme Abū'l-Maḥāsin b. Tagrī Birdī, le disciple de al-Maqrīzī, (d. en 874/1469) et Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) reservent dans leurs œuvres *al-Nujūm al-zāhira* et *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara* des chapitres à la topographie du Caire et ses édifices[42]. Un certain Āq Bughā al-Khāṣikī a écrit pour le sultan al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī au début du X^{e}/XVI^{e} siècle un ouvrage dont un manuscrit se trouve à la BN de Paris sous le titre de *al-Ṭuḥfa al-fākhira fī dhikr rusūm khuṭūṭ al-Qāhira*. Dans cette œuvre l'auteur a copié entièrement la seconde partie des *khiṭaṭ* de al-Maqrīzī avec quelques petites altérations dans le style[43]. A cette époque remonte également une épître de Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī intitulée *Al-fawā'id al-nafisa al-bāhira fī bayān ḥukm shawāriʿ al-Qāhira fī madhāhib al-a'imma al-arbaʿa al-zāhira*, son auteur a récopié textuellement le chapitre concernant *Bayn al-Qasrayn* chez al-Maqrīzī[44].

Au 17^{e} siècle, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abi'l-Surūr al-Bakrī (d. 1060/1650) résume les *khiṭāṭ-s* de al-Maqrīzī dans son *Qaṭf al-azhār min al-khiṭāṭ wa'l-athār*[45]. La valeur de l'ouvrage d'al-Bakrī est d'apporter un complément à celui de al-Maqrīzī. Il nous indique les quartiers ruinés et les nouveaux édifices ainsi que leur location à son époque.

Un auteur appelé Aḥmad al-Ḥanafī, plus connu sous le nom d'al-Bawḥ, rédige un résumé des *khiṭāṭ: al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya fī talkhīṣ al-mawāʿiz wa'l-iʿtibār al-Maqrīzīyya*. Un manuscrit autographe de cette œuvre se trouve à la bibliothèque de Gotha sous le n^{o} 1638.

À la fīn du 18^{e} siècle on trouve la *Description de l'Egypte* que nous ont laisée les savants de l'expédition française et dont deux des savants de l'expédition avaient rédigée deux grands chapitres: un sur "la description de la ville et de la Citadelle du Caire" rédigé par E. Fr. Jomard[46], et l'autre sur "l'Ile et le Miqyas de Rodah" rédigé par J. Marcel[47]. C'est la première fois qu'on rencontre une description

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[42] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, 16 vols., (Le Caire 1929–72); al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥuṣn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rīkh Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, I–II, éd. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, (Le Caire 1967).

[43] Manuscrit de BN de Paris n^{o} 2265; BN du Caire n^{o} 152 *buldān* Taymūr.

[44] Cette épitre fut publié au Caire en 1988 par Amāl al-ʿImarī.

[45] De ce livre existe deux manuscrits: un à la BN de Paris sous le n^{o} 1765 et l'autre à la BN du Caire sous le n^{o} 457 *Jughrāfiya*.

[46] Jomard, E. Fr., "Description de la ville et de la Citadelle du Caire," dans *Description de l'Égypte* (Etat moderne), II^{e} partie, t. XVIII, éd. de Panekouke, (Paris 1826), 1–135, 113–552.

[47] Marcel, J., "Mémoire sur le Mekyas de l'île de Roudah," dans *Description de l'Égypte* (Etat Moderne), II^{e} partie, t. XV, éd. de Panekouke, (Paris 1826), 1–135, 387–582.

topographique accompagnée par une carte détaillée de la ville du Caire et de ses environs. Cette carte qui est la première moderne et fiable a servi comme base pour tous les cartographes qui ont dressé des cartes du Caire dès l'époque du Muḥammad ʿAlī jusqu'à nos jours.

Cette carte n'était pas quand même la première elle était avancé par une carte dressée à la fin de l'époque du sultan mamelouk Qāytbāy vers la fin du X^e^/XV^e^ siècle connue au non du Matheo Pagano qui fut publiée pour la première fois à Venise en 1549. Un examen géneral de cette carte comparée à celle de la description de l'Egypte et à un autre type de sources, les *khiṭaṭs* susmentionnés montre, comme elle a prouvé Sylvie Denoix, qu'elle est globalement fiable[48].

Les guides à l'usage des pèlerins

Passons maintenant à une autre forme de la littérature topographique, les guides à l'usage des pèlerins qui sont "des inventaires à base topographique qui se font . . . les promoteurs des cultes locaux et attirent l'attention au pieux visiteurs sur tous les sanctuaires dispensateurs de bénédictions"[49].

Cette littératature spécialisée qui compte parmi les anciennes de l'Islam, était à l'origine spécifiquement chiʿite. De tous les guides de pèlerinages de la littérature arabe les plus développés sont ceux du Caire qui presentent un intérêt considérable pour la connaissance de la topographie de la ville des morts (al-Qarāfa) qui compose une grande partie de la capitale de l'Égypte.

Yusuf Ragib, dans une étude paru il y'a plus de 25 ans, à dresser un inventaire chronologique de ces monographies[50]. Les plus importants parmi eux et dont ils nous ont parvenu en compte quatre œuvres. La plus ancienne est *Murshid al-zuwwār ilā qubūr al-abrār*

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[48] Garcin, J.-Cl., "Une carte du Caire vers la fin du sultanat de Qaytbay," *Annales Islamologiques*. XVII (1981), pp. 272–85; Denoix, S., "Histoire et formes urbaines (élements de méthode)," dans *Itinéraires d'Égypte – Mélanges offerts au Père Maurice Martin*, réunis par C. Décobert, (Le Caire 1992), 46.

[49] Sourdel-Thomine, J., *Introduction du Guide de lieu de pèlerinage par Harawi*, (Damas, 1957), XXX.

[50] Ragib, Y., "Essai d'inventaire chronologique des guides à l'usage des pèlerins du Caire," *REI* 41 (1973), 259–80.

d'al-Muwaffaq Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Makkī b. ʿUthmān al-Shāriʿī (d. 615/1218). Dans ce livre Ibn ʿUthmān énumère les cinq Compagnons qui reposaient sur les pentes du Muqaṭṭam, ainsi que les ʿAlides célèbres qui entrèrent en Égypte, en signalant leur sépulture lorsqu'ils y furent enterrés. Après avoir consacré une notice à la mosquée d'Ibn Ṭūlūn, Ibn ʿUthmān commence la visite des tombes de saints (*awliyā'*), de successeurs (*tābiʿūn*), de *ʿulamā'* et de *zuhhād*, en partant du Bāb al-Ṣafā, la porte nord de la ville du Fusṭāṭ. La monographie se termine par l'énumeration des sépultures importantes de l'agglomération du Miṣr[51].

La deuxième est *Misbāḥ al-dayājī* de Majd al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nāṣiḥ connu sous le nom d'Ibn ʿAyn al-Fuḍalā' (d. a. 696/1297). Elle comprend deux parties: dans la première il envisage les lieux de pèlerinage du Caire en partant du mausolée de la tête d'al-Ḥusayn. Il pénétre dans la nécropole par Bāb al-Qarāfa, et se dirige vers le sud jusqu'aux limites du cimetière d'*al-Qarāfa al-kubrā*. De cet ouvrage *Dār al-Kutub* au Caire possède deux manuscrits sous les n^os^ 1461 *Taʾrīkh* et 87 *buldān* Taymūr.

Le livre le plus important parmi cette série fut *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra fī tartīb al-ziyāra fī'l-qarāfatayn al-kubrā wa'l-ṣughrā* du Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Zayyāt (d. 814/1412). C'est à la demande de quelques amis, Ibn al-Zayyāt composa son guide qu'il termina le 20 Rajab 804/23 février 1402. Dans l'introduction de cet ouvrage Ibn al-Zayyāt donne la liste des auteurs qui avaient traité des lieux de pèlerinage du Caire avant lui. Après la cinquième chapitre il commence la visite de la nécropole par le mausolée de Nafīsa bint al-Ḥasan, il divise ensuite la nécropole en trois côtes (*jihāt*) qui rayonnent du Bāb al-Qarāfa et envisage respectivement les zones occidentale, mediane et orientale. Ibn al-Zayyāt se reservait d'écrire par la suite une monographie sur les *khiṭaṭ*-s du Caire, du Miṣr et du désert où il comptait mentionner leurs lieux de pèlerinage, comme il l'annonce plusieurs fois dans ses *kawākib*, mais on ne sait pas si il a achevé la composition de cette monographie ou non[52].

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[51] al-Muwaffaq b. ʿUthmān, *Murshid al-zuwwār ilā qubūr al-abrār*, éd. Muḥ. Fatḥī Abū Bakr (Le Caire 1995).

[52] Ragib, Y., "Essai", 276; *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra* fut publié médiocrement au Caire en 1907, une édition critique et scientifique est actuellement d'une grande necessité.

Le dernier livre qui nous a parvenu dans cette série est *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb wa bughyat al-ṭullāb fi'l-khiṭat wa'l-mazārāt* de Nūr al-Dīn Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad. b. ʿUmar b. Khalaf al-Sakhāwī (d. a. 887/1482). Dans ce livre al-Sakhāwī prend pour point de départ pour la randonnée à travers la nécropole, le mausolée de la tête du ʿAlide Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan dans la banlieu de *Maṭariyya*, il traverse ensuite le cimetière qui s'étend au nord du Bāb al-Naṣr, pénètre dans la ville du Caire et mentionne les lieux de pèlerinage *intra-muros*. Puis son excursion le mène tour à tour dans le quartier de Marāgha, dans l'agglomération de Miṣr et dans la banlieu de Giza. La visite de la nécropole sud prend pour point de départ Bāb al-Qarāfa. Le circuit suivi concorde avec celui d'Ibn al-Zayyāt. Enfīn, comme ce dernier, il termine sa monographie par l'énumération des sept sépultures qu'al-Quḍāʿī recommendait de visiter[53].

[53] Ragib, "Essai", 278; le *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb* fut publié pour la première fois en marge du *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb* d'al-Maqqarī, au Caire en 1304h., puis médiocrement avec un commentaire plein d'erreurs par Mah. Rabi' et H. Qasim au Caire en 1937.

AL-MAQRĪZĪ'S ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSITION FROM TURKISH TO CIRCASSIAN MAMLUK SULTANATE: HISTORY IN THE SERVICE OF FAITH

Amalia Levanoni

I

Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī (760/1359–845/1441)[1] was one of the exponents of Mamluk historiography who were eyewitness to the events that took place during the reign of Sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (784/1382–791/1389; 791/1389–801/1399) to whom contemporary historians and modern scholars attributed the transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate.[2] Al-Maqrīzī's works were highly esteemed by his contemporaries and authors of later Mamluk era as first hand accounts. Thus, for example, the fifteenth century historian Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 906/1500), quoting previous authorities that attributed great significance to al-Maqrīzī's original part in his historical narrative, said: "he wrote a book on what he witnessed and heard which he did not copy from [any] book [*jamaʿa kitāban fīmā shāhadahu wa-samiʿahu mimmā lam yankulhu min kitāb*] . . ."[3] Yūsuf b. Taghrī Birdī (d. 874/1470) stressed even more al-Maqrīzī's original contribution to history in the words: "and he did not stop to be an accurate and careful observer of the events and history until his death [*wa-lam yazal ḍābiṭan ḥāfiẓan li'l-waqāʾiʿ*

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[1] Contemporary historians disagree about al-Maqrīzī's date of birth. See, for example, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*, ii, 21.

[2] See, for example David Ayalon, "The Circassians in the Mamlūk kingdom", *JAOS*, 69 (1949). Reprinted in idem, *Studies on the Mamluks*, no. IV; Priscilla Soucek, "Ethnicity in the Islamic Figural Tradition: The Case of the 'turk'", *Ta'rīkh*, 2 (1992), 73–103; Muḥammad Muḥammad, al-Ṣayyād, Aḥwāl Miṣr al-iqtiṣādiyya wa'l-ijtimāʿiyya kamā Ṣawwarahā al-Maqrīzī" in ed. Muḥammad Mustafa Ziyāda et al., *Dirāsāt ʿan al-Maqrīzī*, (Cairo, 1971), 95–109; Ḥakīm Amin Abd al-Sayyid, *Qiyām dawlat al-Mamālīk al-thāniya*, (Cairo, 1966); Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in Later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge, 1967), 26.

[3] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʿ*, ii, 24.

wa'l-ta'rīkh ilā an tuwuffiya]."[4] Furthermore, al-Maqrīzī gained fame as an historian of considerable authority in the scholarly circles of his own time: "and he remained in his city [Cairo] perseveringly busy [writing] history so that it earned him fame and a wide reputation [*wa-aqāma bi-baladihi ʿākifan ʿalā al-ishtighāl bi'l-ta'rīkh ḥattā ishtahara bihi dhikruhu wa-baʿuda fīhi ṣituhu*]."[5] Ibn Taghrī Birdī contended that it was in the field of history that al-Maqrīzī gained his fame both during his life-time and after his death "so much so that he was set up as an example [*ḥattā ṣāra bihi yuḍrab al-mathal*]."[6]

It is not surprising, then, that historians of the Mamluk era like Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (852/1449),[7] Ibn Taghrī Birdī,[8] al-Sakhāwī,[9] Taqī al-Dīn b. Qāḍī Shuhba (851/1448),[10] Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Duqmāq (809/1407),[11] ʿAlī b. Dāwūd al-Ṣayrafī (or al-Jawharī) (d. 900/1495)[12] all referred to his works in their own compilations and leaned heavily particularly on his *Kitāb al-mawā'iẓ wa'l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār* and *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*.[13]

However, it is the coupling of al-Maqrīzī's allure as a central figure in the scholarly circles of the Mamluk era, together with his open contempt to Sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq in person and the Circassians as an ethnic group that impugns the reliability of Mamluk historiography concerning the transition from Turksih to Circassian Mamluk

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[4] Yūsuf ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa'l-mustawfī baʿda al-wāfī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amin, 6 vols., (Cairo, 1986), i, 420.

[5] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, ii, 22.

[6] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Manhal*, i, 417. See also: Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr bi-abnā' al-ʿumr* ed. Muḥammad Abd al-Muʿīd Khan, 8 vols., (Haydarabad, 1967), i, 3 and Yūsuf b. Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-ẓāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l Qāhira*, vols. 7–16 (Cairo, 1963–1972), xiv, 336.

[7] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbā'*, i, 3.

[8] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-ẓāhira*, xi, 290–4, 373.

[9] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, i, 146; iii, 9, 12.

[10] Taqī al-Dīn b. Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh, (Damascus, 1977), iii, 167, 196, 224, 306, 352, 562, 597.

[11] For Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Duqmāq's reliance on al-Maqrīzī, see: Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-aʿyān al-mufīda*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn Izz al-Dīn ʿAlī, 2 vols., (Beirut, 1992), i, 163.

[12] ʿAlī b. Dāwūd al-Ṣayrafī (or al-Jawharī), *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa'l-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, 3 vols., (Cairo, 1970–1973), i, 51, 110, 121, 213, 326, 331, 393, 394, 420.

[13] Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā'iẓ wa'l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār*, 2 vols., (Cairo, 1987); idem, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Mustafa Ziyada and Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAshur, 4 vols., (Cairo, 1930–1973).

sultanate. The purpose of this article is first to analyze the way al-Maqrīzī chose to present the state of affairs during the transition period under Barqūq. Attempts will also be made to explain also al-Maqrīzī's moral stance on the ethnic transition of the Mamluk sultanate in light of his ethical views on history. I will then identify issues in which scholars studying the period of the transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate might have difficulty.

II

Al-Maqrīzī held the opinion that the end of Turkish dominance in the Mamluk sultanate was marked by an event some two years prior to Barqūq's rise to power. This was the battle which saw the disintegration of the coalition between amirs Barqūq and Baraka—*atābak al-ʿasākir* and *amīr majlis* respectively—who held the reins of government behind the Qalawunid sultan al-Manṣūr ʿAlī (778/1376–783/1381). This battle took place between 7–10 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 782/11–14 June 1380, and left Barqūq the unchallenged contender for power in the sultanate. Al-Maqrīzī sums up this event in the following words

> And the Turkish government has come to an end completely. They [the Turkish amirs] were pursued, executed, banished and imprisoned. And the Circassians had already . . . spoken among themselves, saying that there would be a great civil war that would be put down, and after it another one would break out between them and the Turks in which they would vanquish the Turks after a fight, and [then] they would be under their command. And when there was the rebellion led by Īnāl, they spoke of it aloud and so unashamedly [*min ghayr iḥtishām*] and made it [public] to the degree that the most senior and the most junior of them spoke of it. And thus it indeed happened. . . .[14]

In some sentences, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba followed al-Maqrīzī to the letter in his description of Barqūq's victory over Baraka.[15] Al-Maqrīzī's influence on Ibn Taghrī Birdī is also clear.[16]

There can be no doubt that the above excerpt is another case of al-Maqrīzī's retrospective presentation of events so common in his

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[14] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iii, 385.
[15] Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, iii, 26.
[16] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 179.

Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk.[17] Al-Maqrīzī wrote this voluminous book after his return to Cairo from Damascus in 820/1417. This fact shows that he had enough time to contemplate the events which led to Barqūq's rise to power and chose to present them as he actually did. Al-Maqrīzī did not merely record these events but took a moral stance against Barqūq both on personal and factional grounds. He attributed to Barqūq an intention of persecuting the Turkish Mamluks after the battle and went as far as accusing his faction, allegedly the Circassian faction, in mounting a long planned challenge to the Turks on ethnic lines, confident of their success when it took place.

However, a further analysis of Barqūq's relations with amirs and Mamluks from Baraka's camp before and after their struggle, as recorded in the writings of al-Maqrīzī himself as well as those of other chroniclers, reveals al-Maqrīzī's inaccuracy in the above excerpt. The analysis shows that Barqūq acted in a calculated way in order to gain power. His calculations, however, were of a very different nature to those attributed to him by al-Maqrīzī. Barqūq, whose military resources were slender, first set about establishing himself as the leader of a broadly-based Mamluk faction. In the months leading up to the battle he carefully avoided any confrontation with his rival Baraka, resisting a number of deliberate provocations. After the battle he made no attempt to eliminate his adversaries from Baraka's faction, choosing instead to minimize their defeat by allowing them to retain their positions and subsequently even promoting them to military command.

Indeed it is worthy of note that some six months before the battle Barqūq had an opportunity to rid himself of Baraka and had not availed himself of it. This was during the abortive uprising led by Īnāl al-Yūsufī (d. 794/1391–92), then *silāḥdār*, on 24 Shaʿbān 781/5 December 1379. The stated aims of this rebellion as Īnāl himself put them *post factum*, were to remove Baraka and improve his own position under Barqūq. Prior to this rebellion Īnāl tried to incite Barqūq against Baraka, but to no avail. As soon as Barqūq learned of the rebellion, he returned to Cairo and with some difficulty put it down. Īnāl and his followers were arrested and imprisoned. Barqūq informed Baraka of the rebellion and the latter's return to Cairo

[17] See for another case: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 386–88.

provided the opportunity for an extravagant display of friendship between the two.

The sources contain two versions of Īnāl al-Yūsufī's origins. According to the historian Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Furāt (d. 807/1404) Īnāl was of Turkish extraction. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), however, maintains that Īnāl was a relative of Barqūq and thus a Circassian. Despite the fact that Ibn al-Furāt was then living in Cairo and experienced these events at first hand, whereas Ibn Khaldūn arrived in Cairo only two years later, it was the latter who enjoyed access to the Mamluk elite. Ibn al-Furāt himself admitted that he was not privy to information coming from government high officials and that in these matters he had to rely on those historians "who can observe the positions of office holders in government [*mimman lahu iṭṭilāʿ ʿalā aḥwāl arbāb al-dawla.*"[18]

However, Ibn Khaldūn cites Alṭūnbughā al-Jubānī (d. 792/1390) as a prime source. During the rule of Barqūq, Alṭūnbughā occupied high offices and was indeed a very close friend of Ibn Khaldūn.[19] It was through his mediation, for example, that Ibn Khaldūn received his nomination as the Maliki *Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*, the chief qadi of the Maliki school of law in Egypt in 786/1384.[20] Alṭūnbughā's high posts in government facilitated his acquaintance with Īnāl al-Yūsufī. They served together prior to Baraka's removal: the former as *raʾs nawba thānī* and the latter as *amīr silāḥ*. Later, on 20 Ṣafar 792/1 February 1390 both were nominated by Barqūq to top positions in government—Īnāl as *atābak al-ʿasākir* while Alṭūnbughā as *raʾs nawbat al-umarāʾ* and *aṭābak*.[21]

Ibn Khaldūn's version of Īnāl al-Yūsufī's origins and relationship to Barqūq would thus explain the strategies behind the latter's actions during the various successive crises with rival and allied Mamluk factions. Aware that his standing depended on the soundness of the coalition with his rival Baraka, he, most probably, preferred to cement his relationship with him after Īnāl's rebellion even at the cost of

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[18] Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahīm b. al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Qusṭanṭīn Zurayk, (Beirut, 1936), ix, 52.

[19] W.J. Fischel, "Ibn Khaldūn's Autobiography in the Light of External Arabic Sources", in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1956), 298.

[20] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ*, ii, 158; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Rafʿ al-iṣr ʿan quḍāt Miṣr*, ed. Ḥamid ʿAbd al-Majīd et al., (Cairo, 1957), ii, 344.

[21] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 707.

sacrificing an ally who might have been a blood relative. This hardly concurs with al-Maqrīzī's assertion that Barqūq's strategy was defined on ethnic lines. Even after Baraka's removal, Barqūq discarded ethic calculations when he kept Īnāl at arm's length. He reinstated Īnāl only when it suited him, first as *nā'ib* of Tripoli and then *nā'ib* of Aleppo.[22] But not until Ṣafar 792/February 1390, when he finally consolidated his position, did Barqūq recall Īnāl to high office in Cairo.[23]

In the wake of Īnāl's rebellion, al-Maqrīzī tells us that relations between Barqūq and Baraka deteriorated. Baraka demanded the extradition of one of the stalwarts of Barqūq's camp, Amīr Aytamush al-Bijāsī, whose name had been linked with Īnāl's rebellion. Under various pretexts, Barqūq refused. Had he acceded to this demand, he would have lost credibility in the eyes of his supporters. However, he could not afford to alienate Baraka. To resolve this dilemma Barqūq secured the infallible power of the clergy's mediation. In the company of the Sūfī Sages Shaykh Akmal al-Dīn al-Rūmī al-Bābiratī and al-Saykh Amīn al-Dīn al-Khalwī, Aytamush went to Baraka—on 17 Ṣafar/23 May—and the latter had no choice but to grant him *khil'a*, a dress of honour.[24]

But two days later Baraka renewed his demand, and again Barqūq called upon the clergy for help. This time, the four chief judges of the schools of law in Egypt carried a formal proposal that the government be placed effectively in the hands of the Qalawuni sultan so as to reduce the tension between the two rival amirs. Once again, Baraka had no choice but to accept Barqūq's proposal. Al-Maqrīzī's negative stand towards Barqūq is clearly shown in his presentation of Barqūq's reliance on the qadis as "cunning and artifice [*makīda minhu wa-dahā'*]".[25] It is worth of note that despite al-Maqrīzī's admission that Baraka's accusations against Aytamush "proved to be false [*wa lam yaẓhar lahu ṣaḥḥa*]",[26] his account of these events leaves the impression that it was Barqūq who initiated this crisis.

The climactic battle between Barqūq and Baraka broke out sev-

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[22] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 389, 396.

[23] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 707.

[24] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 379; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 174. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbā'*, ii, 2.

[25] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 379.

[26] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 379; See also: Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm* xi, 179; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, iii, 22; Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān*, Topkapi Saray (Istanbul), ms. no. A2911B.II, fol. 66R.

enteen days later, on Monday 7 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 782/11 June 1380. On this day, Amīr Ṣarāy al-Rajabī, one of Baraka's close associates warned Barqūq that Baraka intended to kill him at Friday prayer. Three of Baraka's close associates, coincidentally visiting Barqūq on the occasion of his son's birth, were immediately arrested and troops sent to the Mosque of Ḥasan to shoot at Baraka's house which stood adjacent to it. By 9 Rabīʿ al-Awwal/13 June, the third day of the fighting, despite the proficiency and persistence of his faction, it was clear Baraka would be defeated. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba relates that when the signs of defeat became apparent most of Baraka's Mamluks defected.[27] Barqūq offered him the governorship of any region he might chose outside Egypt, a generous proposal Baraka rejected outright. On 10 Rabīʿ al-Awwal/14 June, Baraka was captured and sent to jail in Alexandria where he was killed later.[28]

However, the defeat of Baraka's faction did not allow Barqūq to behave as "an unchallenged victor." When the news of Baraka's death reached Cairo, his Mamluks threatened to rebel and on 5 Rajab/5 October, Barqūq was forced to send Amīr Yūnus al-Nurwuzī to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death.[29] On his arrival in Alexandria, Yūnus al-Nurwuzī ordered Baraka's grave opened. Baraka was found to have died violently and to have been buried unshrouded and without first being ritually washed. To appease Baraka's incensed mamluks, a new and fitting burial ceremony was held for Baraka. Khalīl b. ʿArrām, the *nā'ib* of Alexandria was held responsible for Baraka's death. He was arrested and brought to Cairo where Barqūq made a very public example of him before allowing Baraka's mamluks to cut him to pieces. The documents Ibn ʿArrām produced to prove he had acted on Barqūq's explicit orders were ignored by all concerned, not least Baraka's followers who appear to have been satisfied by this gesture of Barqūq's.

These events surrounding Baraka's death demonstrate clearly that Baraka's faction was far from being destroyed. It could still pose a conceivable threat of rebellion. Indicative of the threat Baraka's amirs and mamluks could pose was the conciliatory manner in which Barqūq approached them after their defeat.

A few days after the battle, on 17 Rabīʿ al-Awwal/16 June, we are told that Barqūq reviewed Baraka's mamluks and from them

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[27] Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, iii, 25.
[28] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 383–84.
[29] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 396–98.

chose those he wanted to enlist in his own service.[30] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, referring to Egyptian chroniclers, says that after the removal of Baraka ". . . Barqūq reviewed the mamluks of Baraka and took the senior [*akābirahum*] into his service".[31]

As al-Maqrīzī relates, immediately after the battle there were arrests among Baraka's amirs. But a month later, on 26 Jumādā al-Ūlā/29 August, Barqūq released all the detainees except for four of the most notable, i.e., Baraka, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī, Qarā Damurdāsh and Baydamur al-Khwārazmī.[32] Later Barqūq actually organized a delegation of amirs who requested the sultan al-Mansūr ʿAlī (who was a puppet sultan, as were the majority of the Qalawunid house during this period) to release three of the four and leave only Baraka in jail where he was killed later as was mentioned earlier.[33]

A study of the amirs imprisoned following the battle shows that sixteen out of twenty-eight amirs were reappointed to senior offices. Significant is that at least five of them were Turks and one a Turkoman. Eleven of these amirs remained in Egypt and five were sent to Syria. Of those who remained in Egypt, four held the rank of Amir of One Hundred and Commander of One Thousand [*amīr mi'a wa-muqaddam alf*], two were Amirs of Forty [*amīr arbaʿīn, amīr ṭablkhāna*] and two served consecutively as *nā'ib* al-Bīra, without notation of amirate rank.

In addition, of nine other amirs identified with Baraka whose names do not appear in the lists of those imprisoned and who joined Barqūq's ranks, six were Turks. Three amirs of this group were Amirs of One Hundred and Commanders of One Thousand, four were Amirs of Forty, and the other two were the *nā'ib* of Safed and the Governor of Lower Egypt.

Another of al-Maqrīzī's accusations against Barqūq is that he deliberately manned the army with Cirtcassian Mamluks and promoted them to high positions. However, there are indications in the sources showing that Barqūq was greatly dependent on the situation in the slave markets at the time. Al-Maqrīzī himself relates that Aydaku (d. 814/1411), the ruler of the Golden Horde, did not allow the sale of children from that region. Consequently the import of Turkish

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[30] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 386; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 180.
[31] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 180.
[32] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 394.
[33] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 399.

Mamluks to Eygpt and Syria decreased significantly.[34] On the other hand, the slave markets abounded with Circassian Mamluks.

A careful study of the biographies of the amirs who served in Barqūq's regime, from his rise to power in 784/1382 to his death in 801/1399, shows that among them were close to a hudnred Turkish amirs, many of whom were Amirs of One Hundred and Commanders of One Thousand and held very high offices.

Al-Maqrīzī's retrospective presentation of the factional struggle between amirs Barqūq and Baraka, then, does not confirm with the "historical facts", at least as they are shown in the sources. It does reflect, however, his regret at the waning of Turkish dominance in the Mamluk sultanate. This we learn from his moral judgment of the Circassians' rise to power.

Al-Maqrīzī found it necessary to include ʿAbd Allāh al-Saksayawī's story of his dream in Barqūq's obituary. Al-Saksayawī informed al-Maqrīzī's father that he had a dream of a monkey climbing the *minbar* (pulpit) in the Ḥakimi mosque.[35] After he had delivered the Friday ceremony, *khūṭba*, he entered the *miḥrāb*, with the intention of leading the prayer. While he was praying, the people rose against him and took him out of the *miḥrāb*.

Al-Maqrīzī did not leave his readers in any doubt as to the interpretation of this dream and concluded: "and his [Barqūq's] preeminence over the people and his ascent to power is the interpretation of this dream, because he imitated [showed] many of the apes' moral virtues [like] stinginess, covetousness, corruption and baseness [*shaḥḥan wa-ṭamʿan wa-fasādan wa-radhāla*] . . ."[36]

Furthermore, al-Maqrīzī attributed to Barqūq the introduction of "three turpitudes [*thalāthat ashyāʾ qabīḥa*]" into the Mamluk sultanate: homosexuality, bribery and dullness of the markets.[37] It is worthy of note that Ibn Taghrī Birdī devoted a long debate to these allegations by al-Maqrīzī with the purpose of proving that these "three turpitudes" were prevalent in the country prior to Barqūq's rise to power. Ibn Taghrī Birdī used this opportunity to condemn al-Maqrīzī for his deviation from the historian's responsibility for accuracy, in

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[34] al-Magrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, v, 521; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ*, ii, 325.

[35] The mosque which was erected by the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim in Cairo between 380/990 and 394/1003. It became the Friday mosque of the city until the fall of the Fatimids 567/1171.

[36] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 619.

[37] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, iii, 618.

the words: "and the sage Taqī al-Dīn [al-Maqrīzī] . . . had his known nonconformities every now and then [*kāna lahu inḥirāfāt maʿrūfa tāra wa-tāra*]."[38]

Mention must also be made of al-Maqrīzī's contempt for the Circassians as an ethnic group which impinged on his opinion of their fitness to rule. He clearly identified their misrule with their racial shortcomings, and linked the decline of the Mamluk army and the sultanate with the Circassians' rise to power, as it is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> And the import of mamluks has become of people who were, in their own country, something between sailors and water carriers in a tree garden and the like . . . and the majority deviate from religion. Among them are those who are more adulterous than an ape and greater brigands than a mouse and more corrupt than a wolf. Indeed, the land of Egypt and Syria, from the mouth of the Nile to the Euphrates' bed, has been desolated by thoughtless mismanagement, the great neglect of the governors, and the bad administration of those in power. . . .[39]

III

Later medieval religious scholarly circles held, no doubt, implicit and explicit criticism on the Mamluk government[40] because they were both its close associates serving as office holders in the bureaucracy, and its immediate victims when it came to its confiscatory policy. Later Mamluk historiography clearly reflects this critical attitude of the intelligentsia towards the Circassian Mamluks.[41] Nevertheless, al-Maqrīzī was unique among the chroniclers of his age in the provocative style he used and his personal involvement in his historical writing. While most chroniclers tended to maintain a modicum of civility in their criticism, al-Maqrīzī was notorious already in his own

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[38] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, xi, 292. See also, xv, 89.

[39] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ii, 214. See also: A. Alouche, *Mamluk Economics, A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah*, (Salt Lake City, 1994), 23, 24.

[40] See, for example, Ibn Taghrī Birdī's criticism on the Mamluks' conduct: *Nujūm*, viii, 228.

[41] On this issue see: C.F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power*, (New York, 1994), 102–190; B. Martel-Thoumian, *Les Civils et l'administration dans l'état Militaire Mamlūk (IX^e/XV^e siècle)*, (Damascus, 1991), 171–79.

lifetime for the rough side of the tongue he gave to the subjects of his criticism.

Al-Sakhāwī contended that al-Maqrīzī gained his central position in the scholarly circles of his age because of the flattery rulers and high office holders lavished on him in order to escape his lashing: "the high ranking people praised him out of deception either because of their fear of his pen or for his discourses [*tabjīl al-akābir lahu imma mudārā lahu aw li-ḥusn muthākarātihi*]".[42]

Al-Maqrīzī's motives for his severe attacks, especially on office holders in government, might be found in his deep commitment to the role Islam allotted to religious scholars, the *'ulamā'*, in the guidance of their community. Al-Maqrīzī had been prepared to be a religious scholar since his early childhood. He was the son of a Shāfi'ī father and grandson of two well-known religious scholars. His maternal grandfather was the wealthy philologist and Ḥanafī jurist, Ibn al-Ṣā'igh (d. 776/1375), and his paternal grandfather was the Ḥanbalī 'Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad (d. 733/1332).[43] He received the thorough religious education which a wealthy scholarly family could provide and which equipped him with the qualifications needed for administrative and scholarly posts. He held posts such as deputy judge, *muḥtasib* (the official overseeing craftsmen and markets), preacher in the Mosque of 'Amr in Fustat, chief administrator of al-Ḥākim Mosque, and professor of ḥadīth in the Mu'ayyadiya College in Cairo. In Damascus, where he spent about ten years beginning in 810/1408, he held teaching positions at the Ashrafiya and Iqbāliya Colleges and was chief financial administrator of the Qalānisiya and the great Nūrī Hospital. Back in Cairo, where he decided to give up an unsatisfying public career, he dedicated his whole time to writing history.[44] From such an independent position, an opinionated and seasoned radical scholar like al-Maqrīzī could criticize the Mamluk regime when it fell short of the traditional Muslim political theory.

The issue of true leadership occupied the *'ulamā'* community since the inception of the caliphate in Islam. Accommodating the political realities with the decline of the religious and political power of

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[42] Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, ii, 24; Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Kītāb al-tibr al-masbūk fi dhayl al-sulūk*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Bek, (Cairo, 1896), 24.

[43] Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fi a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jadd al-Haqq, 5 vols., (Cairo, n.d.), ii, 391.

[44] F. Rozenthal, "al-Maqrīzī", *EI*[2] vi, 193.

the caliphate since the tench century and the rise to power of slave and nomadic chieftains, Sunni Muslim theologians conceived of Muslim government as a condominium of the moral authority of the Caliph and the effective powers of the sultans. After the demise of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad in 656/1258 and its reestablishment later in Cairo under Mamluk military rule without any real power, political realities led the Muslim scholars to introduce the requirement for advising and admonishing the ruling elites to induce them to observe and implement the dictates of the *Sharī'a*, the sacred law of Islam, into the Islamic political theory. The radical theologist Aḥmad b. Taymiya (661/1263–728/1328), famous for his political activism in the Mamluk realm, held that the *'ulamā'* were responsible for upholding Muslim law by giving religious advice to the military ruler, the Mamluk sultan, and teaching true principles to the community of the Muslims. Sunni political theory, then, regarded the sultan and the scholar as key figures in the Muslim political order.[45]

The echo of the Sunni political theory is manifest in al-Maqrīzī's historical thought. As a member of the religious scholarly circles, he clearly claimed the important role of guiding the Muslim community for the *'ulamā'*.[46] Like other premodern Muslim historians, he held that history had a general and immediate didactic meaning indicating that God is the ultimate authority and Islam the true faith.[47] The coupling of these two ideas meant that it was considered a privilege or at least legitimate among Medieval Muslim historiographers to use the historical narrative as an instrument in delivering their religious vision to the community. Accordingly, al-Maqrīzī's poison pen campaign against al-Ẓāhir Barqūq and his fierce criticism of the Circassians form a religio-political statement made primarily for the "public interest."

This is more evident in his *Ighāthat al-ummah bi-kashf al-ghummah*, which was compiled under the impact of the turbulent twelve year civil war after Barqūq's death (801/1399). Here al-Maqrīzī openly states that the reason for writing this treatise was his concern for the welfare of the people. As he was one of those appointed by God

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[45] For more details on the Muslim political thought see: I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge, 1994), 181–84.

[46] al-Maqrīzī, *Ighātha*, 24. See also, 23.

[47] al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, i, 7–8.

to guide the community,[48] he contends, it was his duty to show those in power the causes of the crisis in the country and the way of recovery:

> Therefore, I have decided to indicate the causes of this catastrophe and the way which this terrible calamity has persisted in the country and afflicted the people. I shall conclude by stating the means of eradicating this disease and of eliminating the scourge, while glancing at the prices of our time and giving highlights of past periods of inflation and past ordeals with the hope that God Almighty will guide those to whom He has given the reins of power over the land and the country, to work toward redressing the situation and providing for the welfare of the people.[49]

IV

Given the didactic motives behind al-Maqrīzī's historical narrative—justified as they might be in the light of medieval theory of history—and the great influence his writing exerted on subsequent chroniclers, questions arise concerning the nature of the transition of power from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate.

(1) Did the ethnic factor really play an important role in al-Ẓāhir Barqūq's struggle for power? Or was the ethnic rivalry insignificant in itself and simply cloaked essential conflicting interests between factions primarily organized on individual self-interests?
(2) Was Barqūq's rise to power the cause or the result of the transition from a Turkish to a Circassian Mamluk army, i.e., did Barqūq really initiate a drastic change in the ethnic composition of the Mamluk army, or was his rise to power rather the result of a long and gradual process of the increasing number of the Circassians in the Mamluk elite?

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[48] al-Maqrīzī, *Iġhātha*, 23.
[49] al-Maqrīzī, *Iġhātha*, 24.

AL-MAQRĪZĪ AND IBN TAGHRĪ BIRDĪ AS HISTORIANS OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Irmeli Perho

Both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī present narrative accounts of events that occurred in their society during their lifetimes. They naturally selected what they considered worth telling and mainly concentrated on describing the major political events in the Mamluk court. There are fairly detailed descriptions of the military campaigns led by the Sultans and also the never-ending power struggles between the leading Amirs are discussed. Much less attention is paid to the life of the civilian society and the common people are only occasionally mentioned.

The common people, *al-ʿāmma* as opposed to *al-khāṣṣa*, was a broad group that ranged from the respectable people, the various craftsmen, shopkeepers and workers down to the vagabonds and beggars.[1] The commoners were the majority of the population of the cities, but the contemporary historians, among them Ibn Taghrī Birdī and al-Maqrīzī, showed only marginal interest in them.

Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī belonged to different social groups. They were both scholars, but al-Maqrīzī belonged to a family with long scholarly traditions, whereas Ibn Taghrī Birdī was the son of a Mamluk with more ties to the Mamluk élite than to the surrounding society. How much did their backgrounds influence their reports of events? In this article, I will concentrate on events where the commoners had a role to play and I will try to find out, whether the two historians differed in the way they described the common people.

For this purpose, I have compared events described in al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk*[2] and Ibn Taghrī Birdī's *al-Nujūm*.[3] The events that will be

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[1] For further details on the common people, see I. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge Massachusetts 1967, pp. 80–85. See also my article "The Sultan and the common people", *Studia Orientalia*, 82, (1997), 101–113.

[2] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, 4, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿĀshūr (Cairo 1970–72).

[3] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr w'al-Qāhira*, vol. 14, eds.

discussed occurred within the period from 812/1409–10 to 845/1442, i.e. the years between the approximate date of birth of Ibn Taghrī Birdī and the date of death of al-Maqrīzī.

Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī

Al-Maqrīzī[4] was born in Cairo ca. 766/1364 to a wealthy scholarly family. His grandfather had been a well-known Ḥanbalī *ḥadīth*-scholar in Baʿlabakk, whereas his father, who moved to Cairo, had a modest administrative career. Al-Maqrīzī's maternal grandfather was the Cairene Hanafī scholar Ibn Ṣāʾigh al-Maqrīzī himself also studied Hanafī *fiqh*, but after his father's death he chose to follow the Shāfiʿī school. He got a good education and started a public career, occupying various administrative posts. In the 820s he decided to devote himself solely to scholarly work and resigned from his administrative post.

Yusuf ibn Taghrī Birdī was also born in Cairo, and the year of his birth was probably 812/1409–10. His father was a high ranking Mamluk Amir of Anatolian (*Rūmī*) origin and his mother a Turkish slave.[5] The father reached the height of his career in 813 when he was appointed *nāʾib al-salṭana* of Damascus. He held the post until his death in 815/1412. Ibn Taghrī Birdī was brought up by his sister, who was first married to the Hanafī chief *qāḍī* and later to the Shāfiʿī chief *qāḍī*. Being connected both to the Mamluk and the scholarly élites, Ibn Taghrī Birdī got a wide education ranging from scholarly subjects, such as Hanafī *fiqh*, to military arts. He even took part in a military campaign in Syria during Sultan Barsbay's reign.

In his historical studies, he was guided by al-Maqrīzī and another prominent Egyptian historian Badr al-dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451). It has been said that he got interested in writing narrative history after he had heard al-ʿAynī's works read to the Sultan. Because he was closely connected with the court, being well acquainted with Sultans and Amirs, the main focus of his works was the court to such a

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J.M. Muḥriz and F.M. Shaltut, (Cairo 1972) and vol. 15, eds. I.A. Ṭarkhān and M.M. Ziyāda (Cairo 1972).

[4] On his life, al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, (Beirut s.a.), ii, 21–25. Further sources are mentioned in *EI2*, s.v. al-Makrīzī.

[5] M. Ismāʿīl., *Qaḍāyā fiʾl-taʾrīkh al-islāmī, manhaj wa taṭbīq*, (Beirut, 1974), 156.

degree that a modern historian describes him as "the official historian" of the Circassian Sultans of his time.[6]

Economic issues

Al-Maqrīzī was interested in economics and even wrote a special treatise on the economic policies of his time (*Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma*). This interest was reflected in *al-Sulūk*, where al-Maqrīzī often took up issues such as currency problems and prices.[7] He also reported—at least occasionally—how the common people reacted to economic problems.

The common people were especially affected by food shortages that were caused by speculation or failing crops. Further problems were extra taxes and changes in the value of currency.[8] In 813/1410 the Sultan lowered the value of the *dirham* by changing its exchange rate with copper coins (*fulūs*), and the shopkeepers protested by closing the market. The common people could not buy bread and other foodstuffs in the market, and this must have caused irritation and hardship. Although al-Maqrīzī did not specifically mention any rioting, the population must have protested against the Sultan's ruling, because the Sultan threatened to enter the town himself and attack the *ʿāmma*.[9] According to al-Maqrīzī, the Amirs prevented him from doing it and they also talked him into cancelling the new exchange rate. The reconfirmation of the former rate had the desired effect: the shops were reopened. Here the interests of the commoners and the Amirs coincided, because everyone suffered from the closure of the markets.

Scarcity of bread made the crowds protest again in 828/1425 and 839/1435. Before reporting on these protests, al-Maqrīzī gave background information on the economic situation by stating how all

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[6] Ismāʿīl, *Qadāyā*, 157.

[7] J.L. Bacharach, "Circassian Mamluk historians and their quantitative economic data", *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 12, (1975), 78, has rated al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk* as the most important work for the economic and monetary history of Circassian Egypt.

[8] Economic problems and popular protests have been discussed by Lapidus, Muslim Cities, 144–153 and by B. Shoshan, "Grain riots and the 'moral economy': Cairo, 1350–1517", *Journal of Interdiciplinary History*, 10 (1980), 459–478 and *Popular culture in medieval Cairo*, (Cambridge 1993), pp. 52–66.

[9] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 133.

classes of the population had gotten poorer and by listing inflated prices.[10] It seems as if al-Maqrīzī wanted to justify the popular actions triggered by the food shortage and the bad economy. In 828/1425 the crowds protested against the market inspector (*muḥtasib*), whom they obviously thought to be the cause of the misery, whereas in 839/1435 the people appealed directly to the Sultan when he was out riding, but the Sultan ignored their complaints.[11]

Ibn Taghrī Birdī does not seem to have been very much interested in economic problems.[12] He did not mention the closure of the markets in 813/1410 or the shortage of bread in 839/1435, and his report on the riot of 828/1425 is a direct quotation from al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk*. What made this occurrence special and worth mentioning for Ibn Taghrī Birdī was that the market inspector involved was not just any *faqīh* but the historian al-ʿAynī, one of Ibn Taghrī Birdī's teachers. The incident also enabled him to disseminate the information that al-Maqrīzī and al-ʿAynī did not get along with each other.[13]

An example that illustrates well the difference of focus between al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī, is their respective reports on the long shortage of wheat and bread during the winter months of 818/1415–819/1416. al-Maqrīzī gave a very long and detailed description of the situation.[14] As the background of the shortage he mentioned the poor yield of the fields and, in addition, that mice had damaged the crops in many regions. The military had been sent to upper Egypt and they had also added to the havoc. Exports further diminished the amount of wheat available in the home market and the shortage increased speculation. Al-Maqrīzī then noted that "in spite of all this the Sultan left Cairo in order to travel to Syria"[15] The reason for the Sultan's departure was the news of a *fitna* in Syria.

The Sultan stayed in Syria over the winter and meanwhile in Cairo the situation got constantly worse. Prices of wheat and other

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[10] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 2, 678, 964.
[11] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 2, 698, 964.
[12] There is more economic data in his *al-Ḥawādith*. Obviously Ibn Taghrī Birdī also wanted in this respect continue al-Maqrīzī's work. Cf. Bacharach, "Circassian mamluk Historians", 80.
[13] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 281ff.
[14] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 330–8, 343ff.
[15] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 330.

cereals continued to rise and bread was scarce. The rich hoarded the available wheat and sent buyers far and wide. The prices rose also outside Cairo and the common people (*ʿāmma*) protested in towns, villages and the countryside. On one day tens of thousands of people gathered in Bulāq and threatened to plunder Cairo. Huge crowds of people assembled at the bakeries and some women were crushed to death by the crowd. Finally the Sultan returned to Cairo passing by the monastery in Siryāqūṣ, where he stayed one night listening to recitation, eating and drinking profusely. al-Maqrīzī seems to have wanted to contrast the Sultan's "night of enjoyment" (*laylat gharāʾ*) with the hardships of the population.

After arriving in Cairo, the Sultan took action to stop the rise of prices and strove to ensure that the wheat was distributed fairly but the shortage continued until grain ships started arriving in the first days of 819. The prices still continued to rise for some time but the situation stabilized gradually.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī's description is much shorter and therefore naturally also much less detailed.[16] Al-Maqrīzī's text gives the impression that he wanted to criticize the Sultan for leaving Cairo when the food situation was becoming difficult. Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not agree with this criticism but made an effort to point out that the Sultan only got to know about the problems when he was in Syria. As soon as the Sultan realized the severity of the situation he decided to return to Egypt to deal with the problem. The Sultan's celebration at Siryāqūṣ was described by Ibn Taghrī Birdī as a "royal feast" (*al-layla al-mulūkīya*) and because there is no previous description of the sufferings of the Cairene population, Ibn Taghrī Birdī's report of the eating and drinking does not give the reader an idea of implied criticism as al-Maqrīzī's equivalent.

According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, the situation improved when the Sultan was again in Cairo. He reported that the Sultan's arrival "calmed people's anxiety, because now the Sultan was there to take care of their well-being."[17] He further praised the Sultan for his interest in people's affairs and expressed as his opinion that for that action alone God should forgive the Sultan all his sins. He especially stressed the fact that the Sultan himself took up the duties of *muḥtasib* and looked into the problems personally. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's report gives

[16] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 38–40.
[17] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 39.

the impression that this ended the crisis, although from al-Maqrīzī we learned that the Sultan's actions were not sufficient and the situation started to improve only after several grain shipments arrived in Cairo.

Al-Maqrīzī's description was critical towards the authorities and their decisions, whereas Ibn Taghrī Birdī only reported the Sultan's actions and he was eager to praise them. In contrast to al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī could not have had any personal memories of the crisis: he was only six years old at the time. Whereas al-Maqrīzī could reminisce on how he had himself been forced to pay a high price on wheat,[18] Ibn Taghrī Birdī could only rely on reports of others. However, this is only partly the reason behind the differing ways of reporting. In my opinion Ibn Taghrī Birdī's way of describing the food shortage indicates his identification with the ruling elite rather than the common people. al-Maqrīzī, on the other hand, shared the hardships with the commoners and was less sympathetic towards the rulers.

The ʿāmma and the administrators

Economic crises affected the life of the common people, who reacted to the hardships by protesting against the authorities. The market inspectors, whose work brought them into close contact with the commoners, were often targets of violent protests when food was scarce and the prices high. The people tended to blame the *muḥtasib* for their hardships and they believed that if their demand for a new market inspector was accepted, their situation would improve. Attacking the authorities was one way for the common people to exert political influence. These protests were strong enough not to be ignored by the rulers and sometimes they had the desired effect: an unpopular administrator was dismissed.

In 818/1415 during the severe food shortage, the people started to criticize the *muḥtasib* of Cairo. He was frightened of what might happen to him and asked to be relieved from his duties. His resignation was accepted and another *muḥtasib* appointed.[19] His fear was

[18] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 335.
[19] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 331.

not groundless, because the people could react violently. Only a few years later, in 822/1419, the *ʿāmma* expressed their anger at the Shāfiʿī *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and nearly killed him. The reason for this attack was not specified by al-Maqrīzī, but it may have been connected with the accusations that the *qāḍī* had embezzled funds from a *waqf*.[20]

In 842/1439 the common people of Damascus approached Amir Julbān, the recently appointed *nāʾib*, and complained to him about the inflated prices of meat. The *nāʾib* chose to ignore the complaints and ordered his mamluks to beat the people. The crowd of commoners, however, proved to be stronger and by throwing stones forced the *nāʾib* to withdraw with his soldiers.[21]

These demonstrations of popular discontent were reported by al-Maqrīzī but Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not include them. His report of 818/1415 followed the Sultan, first to Syria and then back to Cairo. Whatever happened in Cairo during the Sultan's absence was only briefly mentioned and the resignation of a muḥtasib or the popular discontent leading up to it were not mentioned.

The attack on the *qāḍī* was not mentioned either, but his dismissal, no reason given, and the appointment of a new *qāḍī al-qudāt* were duly recorded.[22] Ibn Taghrī Birdī also reported the appointment of Amir Julbān as the *nāʾib* of Damascus but without any reference to the violent demonstration that occurred only shortly after. Despite the popular discontent, Julbān remained in the Sultan's favour and this was noted by Ibn Taghrī Birdī, who mentioned his visits to the court and his close relationship with the Sultan.[23]

One demonstration that Ibn Taghrī Birdī did report on occurred in 828/1425 when the common people attacked the historian Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī who acted as *muḥtasib* at the time and with whom Ibn Taghrī Birdī was acquainted. After a verbatim quotation of al-Maqrīzī's report on the event, Ibn Taghrī Birdī added that al-Maqrīzī ignored the fact that the *ʿāmma* actually threw stones at al-ʿAynī. Ibn Taghrī Birdī expressed as his opinion that al-Maqrīzī excluded this information, because he wanted to push the blame for what happened on al-ʿAynī, whom he disliked. Here Ibn Taghrī Birdī referred to the extreme punishments that followed the incident—people were

[20] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 484.
[21] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 3, 1181f.
[22] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 77.
[23] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 336, 344, 359.

arrested randomly and their noses and ears were cut off.[24] Al-ʿAynī was a close companion of the Sultan and when he complained of the people's behaviour, the Sultan reacted with fury. Al-Maqrīzī did express his displeasure at the punishment of people who had nothing to do with the incident, but it is difficult to determine, whether he really wanted to put the blame on al-ʿAynī, as Ibn Taghrī Birdī assumed.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī's point of view can be further illustrated by an incident that occurred in 853/1449. The occurrence falls outside the time frame of this article, but I have included it because it is quite typical. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, the whole incident was considered strange. What happened was that the *ʿāmma* gathered in the area between the Citadel and Bāb Zuwayla: "They were appealing, shouting abuse, cursing and threatening to kill. Nobody knew why they were doing it".[25] The *muḥtasib* was sent down from the Citadel to find out what was happening, but when the people saw him the shouting increased and they started to throw stones at him. Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not offer any explanation for the people's behaviour but in recording the dismissal of the *muḥtasib* soon after the incident he noted that he had performed extremely badly in the office.[26] He did not, however, explicitly connect the bad administration of the *muḥtasib* with the discontent expressed by the people by stoning him.

Decrees of the Sultan

Occasionally the Sultans gave orders that seriously affected the life of the common people—although usually for a relatively short time.[27] The ruler could, for example, initiate construction projects that the common people were expected to accomplish—as forced labour. One such project was the building of a dam on the Nile in 818/1415. For about three months the Cairene commoners, from shopkeepers to tanners and from surgeons to sweepers, had to take their turn in

[24] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 281f; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 2, 698
[25] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 397f.
[26] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 401.
[27] On the relationship between the ruler and the commoners, see also Perho, "The Sultan and the common people".

the construction work. Even some Sufis were conscripted to work but they were soon excused. According to al-Maqrīzī, the work load demanded was not excessive, but what must have affected the daily life more was that the Sultan ordered the shops to be kept closed during the construction period. People's need to go to the market was not allowed to slow down the building of the dam. In the end the whole effort proved to be wasted; when the water of the Nile rose, it swept away the dam.

This occurrence was reported by both historians.[28] al-Maqrīzī explained more thoroughly than Ibn Taghrī Birdī the purpose of the dam, but both described with similar details how the work was accomplished, i.e. how the duties were divided among the Amirs and which groups of the population they brought to work. They also both mentioned the closure of the markets and the Sultan's threat to hang anyone who dared to open his shop. Although they mentioned that this caused hardship for the people, they did not express any criticism towards the project as a whole and both recorded rather laconically the final failure.

They were more critical in their presentation of the Sultan's decree given in connection with the plague in 841/1438.[29] The severe plague worried the Sultan and he asked the four chief *qāḍī*s and some other *faqīh*s whether the plague was God's punishment for some sins the people had committed. The legal scholars said that God might punish fornication (*zinā'*) by sending a plague and some of them held the opinion that the sin could be avoided if women were forbidden to come out of their houses. The Sultan agreed and announced that the women would be severely punished if they did not obey the decree.

The historians noted that the decree was especially harmful to widows, working women and women who did not have anyone to take care of their needs. They also pointed out that economy suffered; a lot of products meant for women such as perfumes, clothes etc. were not sold. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, the Amirs were able to make the Sultan relent a little after a few days and allow female slaves and old women go out and take care of necessary business.

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[28] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 1, 302–304, 313–318; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xiv, 26–29, 32.

[29] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 2, 1032f, 1035, 1038; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 93–96, 98.

Al-Maqrīzī was rather circumspect in his criticism and only pointed out the problems the decree caused for the society and especially for the women. Ibn Taghrī Birdī was more explicit in his condemnation of the Sultan's decree and stated that it showed how incompentent the ruler was. An intelligent ruler would punish only sinners and not all his subjects, both good and bad. Neither historian mentioned when the decree was cancelled, but it probably stayed in effect until the Sultan died, about two and a half months later. The decree was not mentioned in connection with the new Sultan.

Two weeks after handing down the above mentioned decree, the Sultan went riding outside Cairo. When he returned, he gave alms to some poor beggars, who crowded and pestered the distributor of the alms so that he fell off his horse. The Sultan got angry and ordered the sultan of the beggars and the shaykh of the Sufis to prevent able-bodied loafers (*ju'aydīya*) from begging. These should instead work for their living and he decreed that if they continued to beg they would be arrested and put to forced labour. Al-Maqrīzī noted that the order was obeyed and there were almost no beggars on the streets; only the blind, crippled and old people continued to ask for alms. He added that no Sultan had ever before handed down such a decree and stated that people were irritated by it and wished more than ever that the Sultan's rule would soon come to an end.[30]

Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not share al-Maqrīzī's negative attitude to the decree but actually praised it and claimed it to be exemplary. He agreed with the Sultan that begging should be allowed only for those who could not work because of old age or disabilities, whereas healthy people should make a living by working. He stated that the Sultan's decree showed that he cared for his subjects and Ibn Taghrī Birdī only hoped that it would remain in effect. In contrast to al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not indicate that the decree made the Sultan unpopular.[31]

Even though Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not generally pay much attention to the life of the common people, he has recorded with details the three events discussed above. They were rather exceptional and therefore worth mentioning. They affected large parts of the society and even the Amirs must have felt the effect of the Sultan's order

[30] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv, 2, 1037.
[31] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 96f.

to stop women from going out. This not only affected the commoners but the women in élite households also found themselves confined to their homes. It was hardly necessary for them to go out to the market or to other public places, but it must have affected their social life as well. Both historians criticized the prohibition, Ibn Taghrī Birdī actually described the Sultan as incompetent and ignorant, and this indicates that the decree must have been generally unpopular. Ibn Taghrī Birdī was usually loyal to the ruling class and understood their point of view, but on this occasion the Sultan seems to have exceeded the proper bounds and deserved criticism.

The order affecting the beggars did not cause general disapproval. The historians themselves express opposing views; al-Maqrīzī disapproved of it whereas Ibn Taghrī Birdī considered it exemplary. The effect of the decree was much more limited than the one pertaining to women and therefore the opinions varied. However, it is likely that al-Maqrīzī's view reflected more closely the general attitude towards the decree. Ibn Taghrī Birdī saw only the visible result—there were fewer beggars pestering the wealthy—and he may not have been aware of the popular sentiment against the ordinance and the Sultan. al-Maqrīzī was probably better informed on the opinions of the Muslim populace and his report that the Sultan's attack on the beggars made the people pray for the end of his rule may not have been an exaggeration.

The fitna of 842/1438

The common people had an important role to play in situations of civil war. When the rule of a Sultan or an *amīr kabīr* was challenged by a Mamluk faction, each of the contesting parties tried to enlist the support of the commoners. Sometimes the civilians who participated in the battle received *nafaqa*-payments like regular soldiers or sometimes they were only reminded that it was their duty to defend the Sultan against aggressors.

In 842/1438 after the death of Sultan Barsbay, there arose a battle between two competing parties, the supporters of Amir Jaqmaq and the mamluks of Barsbay. Amir Jaqmaq became Sultan but his rule was immediately challenged by Amir Qarqamās. This is the only serious *fitna* that occurred in Cairo within the period studied here and it is described thoroughly by the two historians. They both

recognized the participation of the common people in the battle. They reported how Qarqamās tried to gain the support of the commoners by promising to pay 20 dinars as *nafaqa* for each one who enlisted. The Sultan countered this by reminding the people of their duty to obey the Sultan and by distributing a large number of gold coins to the common people. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, the immediate cash made the *zuʿār* join Sultan Jaqmaq.[32]

In the ensuing battle the common people fought by stones and slings (*maqālīʿ*). This was reported by al-Maqrīzī,[33] whereas Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not mention the *ʿāmma* when he described the actual fighting but concentrated to give detailed information on the actions and fate of the various Amirs. He did, however, mention that when it became evident that Qarqamās was losing, the *zuʿār* looted his house.[34] Two explanations for Ibn Taghrī Birdī's lack of interest in the military effort of the commoners come easily to mind: either the participation of the *ʿāmma* was so commonplace that he did not think it worth mentioning or his military background made him disparage untrained troopers who did not ride on horseback and use swords.

Qarqamās was finally arrested and when he was transported to the Sultan to receive his sentence, the *ʿāmma* gathered to see him and they shouted abuse at him. Ibn Taghrī Birdī reported that they were on the verge of throwing stones at him. Al-Maqrīzī explained their behaviour by stating that Qarqamās was arrogant and conceited and therefore not liked by the common people. In this case Ibn Taghrī Birdī gives more precise information and reports that Qarqamās had been the *wālī* of Cairo and had been excessive in his penalties. The people had felt his rule to be oppressive and tyrannical and therefore used the opportunity to express their ill feeling towards him.[35]

Conclusions

There is a clear difference between al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī in the way they reported on events that had bearing on the life of

[32] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 270.
[33] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv: 3, 1093.
[34] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 272.
[35] al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, iv: 3, 1095; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm*, xv, 274, 276.

the common people. Al-Maqrīzī's interest in economic issues made him informative of the currency fluctuations and food shortages. He also described how the shopkeepers and other commoners reacted to these economic problems by closing the markets or by organizing riots.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī obviously did not pay attention to these events, because he did not usually report them. Within the period studied here, he mentioned one serious food shortage and reported that there were disturbances connected with it. The reason for his interest in this particular event was that the Sultan himself became involved in it. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's reports indicate that his vantage-point was the Citadel and when he looked down upon the city, the people and their problems obviously seemed rather unimportant. His interest was roused when someone he knew was involved, as in the case of al-ʿAynī.

Al-Maqrīzī was a scholar and, in contrast to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, had no close ties to the Mamluk élite. He was clearly interested in the political events in the Mamluk court because they affected the daily life of the whole society. Like Ibn Taghrī Birdī, he described the power struggles and kept track of the various Mamluk factions. However, he also showed interest in the circumstances of the civilian society and recorded valuable information on the various crises and problems the people had to face.

Compared to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Maqrīzī gives a lot of information on the common people, but actually his interest in the *ʿāmma* was rather limited. As a respected *ʿālim*, he belonged to the scholarly élite and lived a life very much different from the lives of the average commoners. He had a rather modest career as a bureaucrat, but was wealthy enough to later give up his public posts and devote himself solely to scholarship.

With the rest of the civilian society, he acutely felt the fluctuations of the economy and the effects of the oppressive rulings of the authorities. He did not fail to report these, but he did not give many details on how the people's lives were affected. He usually confined himself to state rather generally that people got poorer or that their situation was bad. Similarly, he described riots, but did not specify who participated in them or who organized them. It was very seldom that he actually named specific groups of commoners, such as bakers, millers, shopkeepers or tanners. For him—as for Ibn Taghrī Birdī—the commoners formed an undifferentiated mass whose

internal groupings were not significant enough to merit closer analysis and scrutiny.

The background of the two historians influenced the choices they made when compiling their history books. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, as the son of a Mamluk, was particularly interested in the life of the Mamluk élite, whereas al-Maqrīzī as a scholar was interested in a larger variety of topics. Both of them, in spite of their different backgrounds, were only marginally interested in the life of the common people. It is mainly in connection with the more spectacular occasions, such as riots and especially civil wars, that the commoners are mentioned. In the best of these cases, the two authors often complement each other, al-Maqrīzī illustrating the civilian point of view and Ibn Taghrī Birdī giving details of the involved Mamluks and explaining the motives for their actions.

AL-BIQĀʾĪ'S CHRONICLE: A FIFTEENTH CENTURY LEARNED MAN'S REFLECTION ON HIS TIME AND WORLD[1]

Li Guo

Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar al-Biqāʾī is recognized by modern scholars mainly as a ḥadīth scholar whose refutation of the sufi Ibn al-Farīḍ caused a stir among the *ʿulamāʾ* élite and the Mamluk ruling regime in Cairo.[2] Little is known about him as a historian who wrote a hitherto virtually unknown chronicle entitled *Iẓhār al-ʿasr li-asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr* (hereafter *Chronicle*), which will be the subject of this study.[3] Covering the years 855/1451–870/1466, the *Chronicle* contains valuable accounts of the reigns from Jaqmaq (r. 842/1438–857/1453) to Khushqadam (r. 865/1461–872/1467) that fill the gap left by the scarcity of primary sources of this particular era. And its deviation, in many ways, from mainstream historiography sheds light on the divergence and development in late Mamluk historical writing.

An angry man: the author

Al-Biqāʾī[4] was born around the year 809/1406 in the village of Khirbat Ruha, in al-Biqāʾ. His life, which spanned the reigns of

[1] I thank Anne Broadbridge and John Meloy for their comments on an earlier version of the paper. I also thank the participants of the St. Andrews conference for their critique, comments, and suggestions.

[2] Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Farid, His Verse, and His Shrine* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1994), especially 62–75.

[3] Abbreviations used in this paper are: *Chronicle, ed.* = *Iẓhār ʿasr li-asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr: taʾrīkh al-Biqāʾī*. 3 vols., covering 855–865 A.H., ed. Muhammad Salim ibn Shadid al-ʿAwfi (Jiza [Cairo]: 1992–93); *Chronicle, ms.* = *Tarikh al-Biqāʾī*, MS Medina, Maktabat al-Shaykh ʿArif Hikmat 3789; the microfilm is available in Cairo, Maʿhad al-Makhtutat, taʾrikh 893. The folios of the manuscript are not numbered. The present pagination is therefore my own. There are some misplaced folios in the manuscript as well. I thank Bruce Craig and Farouk Mustafa for their help in acquiring the microfilm.

[4] Besides *Chronicle*, his biography is based on: al-Suyūtī, *Nazm al-ʿiqyān fī aʿyān*

eleven Mamluk sultans from Faraj b. Barqūq (r. 801/1399–815/1412) to Qāytbāy (r. 872/1468–901/1496), witnessed tumultuous times. During a raid by the rival tribe of Banū Muzāhim, his father and two uncles were killed. Al-Biqāʾī himself, then twelve years old, was stabbed by a knife and severely wounded. The young orphan escaped from his hometown and finally settled in Damascus where he studied with a number of preeminent scholars. He then left Damascus for Jerusalem where he tried, perhaps unsuccessfully, to launch a job teaching *ḥadīth*. Al-Biqāʾī went to Cairo in 834/1430 where he began his long time association with Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. Al-Sakhāwī, who was al-Biqāʾī's fellow student at Ibn Ḥajar's *ḥadīth* sessions but later became his arch-rival, admits that Ibn Ḥajar regarded al-Biqāʾī highly and helped him embark upon his career. Under Ibn Ḥajar's recommendation, al-Biqāʾī was appointed to teach *ḥadīth* to Sultan Jaqmaq at the Cairo Citadel in 842/1438. He also got a steady job as the residential Qur'an exegete at the Zahir Mosque in Cairo, a position he stayed in, on and off, for nearly thirty-two years.

Al-Biqāʾī traveled intensively. Some of his travels were, curiously, not of the nature of a traditional Muslim scholar's *riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm* (learning journey). During a time span of more than thirty years, he participated in more than 100 Mamluk military campaigns (*al-ghazw*), some on the Mediterranean, reaching as far as Cyprus and Rhodes.[5] Under what circumstances his military adventures, which he called *al-jihād*, took off is unclear; as al-Sakhāwī would wonder, tongue-in-cheek, "only God knows why he did all this."

Al-Sakhāwī surely was not the only person who disliked al-Biqāʾī. Despite being a brilliant scholar, al-Biqāʾī apparently had a hard

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al-aʿyān (New York, 1927), 24–25; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fi waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr* (Cairo, 1974), 2:206, 259; 3:47, 50–51, 89, 169; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (Beirut, n.d.), 101–10; al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbāʾ al-hasr fi abnāʾ al-ʿaṣr* (Cairo, 1970), 186, 256–57, 508; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharat al-dhahab fi akhbar man dhahab* ([Cairo], n.d.), 7:339–40; also see al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām* (Beirut, 1969), 1:50; al-Kahhala, *Muʿjam al-muʾallifin* (Damascus, n.d.), 1:71; Brockelmann, *GAL*, II:142–43, *GALS*, II:177–78. His autobiography is found in his own *ʿUnwān al-zaman fi tarājim al-shuyūkh wa'l-aqrān*. The work is still in manuscript form (MS Umm al-Qura University, Mecca), which I have yet seen. The most recent study of his life is in al-ʿAwfi, *Chronicle*, ed., 1:22–42.

[5] Hajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunun* (Istanbul, 1943), 86. Several such expeditions in the years 829/1426, 844/1440, 847/1443, and 848/1444 have been documented in Mamluk sources; see C. Edmund Bosworth, "Arab Attacks on Rhodes in the Pre-Ottoman Period," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 6/2(1996): 162–64. Al-Biqāʾī's own accounts are found in *Chronicle, ed.*, 1:290, 412–13.

time getting along with many of his fellow *ʿulamāʾ*; nor did he manage to be on good terms with many Mamluk sultans, particularly Jaqmaq. With the downfall of his mentor Ibn Ḥajar, who himself was ousted from the Khanqah al-Baybarsiya in 849/1445 and was returned to the position in 852/1449 and died shortly afterwards,[6] al-Biqāʾī lost his source of support in Cairo. He lost his job at the Zahir Mosque immediately after Ibn Ḥajar's death. Ibn Iyās reports that his prestigious position as Jaqmaq's *ḥadīth* teacher did not last long either. He was dismissed, perhaps due to envious slanders,[7] by the Sultan who put him in the Maqshara jail in Cairo, and was then expelled to India around 857/1453. Al-Biqāʾī remained in the exile and was eventually allowed to return after the mediation of some Mamluk amirs. Back in Cairo, his troubles did not seem to cease, although he might have enjoyed a short period of tranquillity and prestige,[8] thanks to the new regime of Sultan Īnal, a former comrade of his military adventures. He resumed his teaching position at the Zahir Mosque. However, his sharp tone appears to have generated a great deal of animosity within the *ʿulamāʾ* circles. Around 857/1453, for instance, he was offered a position to teach at the Muʾayyad Madrasa, his inaugural lecture was challenged fiercely by the audience.[9] He eventually stepped down, or perhaps was removed from the position in 869/1464. The same year, he resigned from yet other positions as the dean (*naẓīr*) at the Fukahin Mosque, and the head instructor at the Sharfiya Madrasa.[10]

Al-Biqāʾī's highly publicized debate, in 874–75/1469–70, with a group of high-powered *ʿulamāʾ* over the saint-like figure sufi Ibn al-Farīḍ's ode *al-Taʾiya al-kubrā* highlighted his combative career. In the debate, al-Biqāʾī denounced the ode as blasphemous and its doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as heretical. His attacks provoked a flood of refutations. Al-Sakhāwī's lengthy biography of al-Biqāʾī is replete with citations and anecdotes about al-Biqāʾī's clashes with the *ʿulamāʾ* élite

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[6] "Ibn Ḥadjar al-ʿAskalānī," *EI2*, by Franz Rosenthal.

[7] Ibn Iyās mentions "someone came to the sultan and complained" about al-Biqāʾī; see *Badāʾiʿ*, ii, 259. Al-Biqāʾī's own version is that he "decided not to do it anymore," concerning "the opinions of the religious notables" in Cairo; see *Chronicle*, ed., i, 413.

[8] E.g., his wedding was attended by statesmen of the Mamluk court, including the son-in-law of the sultan and the leading *ʿulamāʾ* in Cairo; see *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 20–21.

[9] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 269–84.

[10] *Chronicle*, ms., 477, 482, 485.

in Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem on this matter and their unflattering comments on him. As for other biographers, even those who remain neutral cannot help but to mention that al-Biqāʾī was, in Ibn al-ʿImād's words, "very bellicose and combative; he debated with and attacked [every one], including his own teachers." Al-Ṣayrafī goes even further to claim that despite being a "pious and charitable man, he had an extremely obnoxious personality." This kind of reputation, combined with the competitive atmosphere and, particularly, the ill-fated Ibn al-Farīḍ controversy, finally brought disgrace on al-Biqāʾī. He was denounced as heretical and sentenced to death by some chief *qāḍī*s, only to escape thanks to the protection of Ibn Muzhir, the secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) of Sultan Qāytbāy, who himself was actually in favor of Ibn al-Farīḍ for political reasons.[11] The atmosphere in Cairo was so hostile against al-Biqāʾī that he was almost killed by mobs loyal to Ibn al-Farīḍ. Fearing for his life, he fled, around 880/1475–76, to Damascus where he found a teaching position at the Ghazzaliya Madrasa and was appointed as the senior Qur'an recitor at the cemetery of Umm al-Ṣāliḥ. In Damascus, he continued to speak out against whatever he saw as unfit. In 881/1476, for instance, after having seen townspeople gather with a sufi shaykh in the Grand Mosque, singing and dancing during the prayer, he wrote a tract denouncing such practice,[12] and thereby, among other things, offended some influential shaykhs who, in their turn, treated him so badly in retaliation that even al-Sakhāwī would lament that "the man's hardship was beyond description." Poor and deprived, he died in Damascus on the night of Rajab 18, 885/September 24, 1480 and was buried on the outskirts of Damascus. Al-Sakhāwī wasted no time to point out that al-Biqāʾī died of a "broken liver for he had kept fighting, struggling, and deceiving."[13]

Some of al-Biqāʾī's biographers link his bitter personality and confrontational attitude towards the *ʿulamāʾ* community to his unstable

[11] The sultan viewed the controversy as a threat to one of his aides, Amir Barqūq, who had administered the endowments for Ibn al-Farīd's tomb-shrine in Cairo; see Homerin, *Ibn al-Farid*, 1, 69ff.

[12] The work is entitled *Inārat al-fikr bi-mā huwa al-ḥaqq fī kayfiyat al-dhikr*; see Ḥajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunun*, 170.

[13] al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʾ al-Lamiʿ*, 107. Ibn Iyās's *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr* has conflicting accounts about the place where he died: Mecca (3:51, which is obviously an error) and Damascus (3:169).

life and controversial career. The man, we are told, was so eccentric that he even penned his own eulogy when he was still alive. He had all reasons not to be happy. During his military career he witnessed thousands being killed on the battlefields. Back home in Cairo, he fought on all fronts. His family life was anything but comforting. He not only went through nasty divorces, but also lost his children and concubines one after another. During his lifetime, he gained very little recognition, financially and socially, from the establishment, although he was posthumously honored by nearly all of his biographers, except for al-Sakhāwī, as one of the finest scholars of his time.

Al-Biqāʾī was a prolific author. Some twenty titles are listed under his name by Brockelmann while sixty-six are listed by al-ʿAwfī.[14] The majority of these are religious treatises, the most influential being the *Nazm al-durar fī tanāsub al-ayāt wa'l-suwar*, a *tafsīr* work unique, in Hajji Khalifa's assessment, in its content and style.[15] The work, as will be discussed below, has a significant bearing on the structure of the *Chronicle*. He also wrote intensively on philology, logic, and mathematics, and was at the same time a poet, although Hajji Khalifa considers many of his poems "mediocre."[16]

Six titles ascribed to al-Biqāʾī deal with history. Besides the *Chronicle*, of interest to us here are: 1) *al-Isfar ʿan ashridat al-asfar* an incomplete epitome of his eye-witness accounts of the Mamluk campaigns to Cyprus and Rhodes, which is apparently lost today;[17] 2) *ʿUnwān al-zaman fī tarājim al-shuyūkh wa'l-aqrān*, a biographical dictionary which still remains in manuscript form; and 3) *ʿUnwān al-ʿunwān bi-tajrīd asmā al-shuyūkh wa'l-aqrān,* an epitome of the above. Items 1 and 3 are not listed by Brockelmann, nor is the *Chronicle*. It is not mentioned by Hajji Khalifa either.

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[14] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 32–38.

[15] Hajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1961–62. The work was published in 22 vols., (Hyderabad, 1969–1984).

[16] Hajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 104.

[17] Hajji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 86. The title is wrongly given as *al-Asfar ʿan ashrāf al-asfar* by al-ʿAwfī (*Chronicle* ed., 1:33) and oddly, as *al-Isfar ʿan ashribat [sic.] al-asfar* by M.M. Nassar; see the introduction to his edition of al-Biqāʾī's *Kitāb sirr al-rūḥ* (Cairo, 1990), 24.

Content and sources

As al-Biqā'ī states clearly in the opening of the *Chronicle*,[18] it was conceived as a continuation to Ibn Ḥajar's *Inbā' al-ghumr bi anbā' al-ʿumr fī 'l-ta'rīkh*, which ends at 850/1447, i.e., shortly prior to the latter's death. However, the only extant manuscript of the work, the author's autograph draft (*muswadda*), actually begins from 855/1451, and runs through 870/1466. Some speculate that perhaps the fragments of the text that cover the five year gap, i.e., from 850/1446–477 to 855/1451–52, were missing from the original manuscript. However, the extant manuscript, the formulaic opening statement of which occupies the recto of folio 1, makes it clear that the year 855/1451, which begins on verso of the same folio, is the beginning of the work, or at least that of one of its recensions, if there were any others. This fact is also confirmed by some indirect evidence. On the title page of an autograph of al-Ṣayrafī's *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, which ends at 850/1447, it is stated, by a hand other than the author's own, that "al-Biqā'ī's *Ta'rīkh* begins from 855 A.H. and runs up to 870 A.H."[19]

The title of the *Chronicle*, "Lightening the Dusk with Regard to the Secrets of the People of the Age," may sound somehow like today's tabloid headlines. However, the work is in fact a serious attempt to chronicle major political, military, social, and religious events in Egypt and Syria, with a considerable amount of biographical material as well. The value of the work is underlined by the fact that the period it covers, 855/1451–870/1466, i.e., from the reign of Jaqmaq to that of Khushqadam, is perhaps the least known era in late Mamluk history, because of the lack of primary sources and, perhaps consequently, nearly total silence of modern scholarship.

A quick look at the *Chronicle*, a densely written 300 folios of manuscript with an enormous amount of marginal notes, reveals that it offers far more details and stories than any other known contemporary chronicles such as Ibn Taghrī Birdī's *al-Ḥawādith* and *al-Nujūm*,[20] which have long been considered as *the* sources for the

[18] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 63.

[19] *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa'l-abdan fī tawārikh al-zaman* (Cairo, 1970), 1:12, 18–19.

[20] *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa'l-shuhūr*, viii (California edition, 1942); vols. i, ii, (Beirut, 1990); Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-ẓāhira fi muluk Miṣr wa-al-Qahira*, 7 vols (California edition, 1929), 16 vols., (Cairo edition, 1972).

period. Both al-Biqāʾī's and Ibn Taghrī Birdī's chronicles, for instance, contain the same amount of approximately 130 entries that took place in the year 855/1451.[21] However, the differences lie in the stories they tell and how they are told. Overall, al-Biqāʾī tends to be more elaborate and attentive to details while Ibn Taghrī Birdī's accounts are much terse and matter-of-fact. Moreover, many of al-Biqāʾī's stories do not overlap with these of Ibn Taghriī Birdī. It is noted that despite apparently being aware of the existence of Ibn Taghrī Birdī's work, al-Biqāʾī appears to have deliberately avoided quoting from the Cairene court historian, whom he constantly refers to as "my teacher" (*sayyidī*),[22] and opts to offer his own accounts instead. This decision surely proves to be a blessing for the reader. What makes the *Chronicle* specifically valuable is the fact that its stories are often the ones that Ibn Taghrī Birdī did *not* tell, or the ones that are drawn from the sources that Ibn Taghriī Birdī did *not* utilize. The independence between the two from each other is even more remarkable after the year 860/1455 in that they seem to be almost totally going their own ways. Ibn Taghrī Birdī continues to labour at a balanced and systematic Mamluk court chronicle, while al-Biqāʾī places more emphasis on people's lives and stories. If a generalization is permitted here, we may say that whereas Ibn Taghrī Birdī's work represents a institutional history, al-Biqāʾī's *Chronicle* ought to be better viewed as a social history. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's narrative of each year's events, for instance, always begins with a list of rulers, followed by up-dated information of regulations of weight, money rates, prices in Cairo, the Nile flooding, public health issues, etc., a list that reads like a market inspector's (*muḥtasib*) report. Much attention is given to sometimes tedious records of daily activities of the Mamluk court: major personnel changes, ritual ceremonies, diplomatic events, and such like. Al-Biqāʾī, on the other hand, appears to follow his heart and intuition. His annals do not open with any of this kind of laundry list. Stories he deemed unimportant, such as court protocol trivialities, routine minor appointments and grants, etc., are often ignored. And on the other hand, he drags, sometimes disproportionally, on those stories that he cares about. Although we are not always certain about his criteria in selecting his stories, a

[21] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith* (Beirut ed.), 317–43; *Chronicle*, ed., i, 64–173.
[22] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., i, 116; *Chronicle*, ms., 520, 545, 595.

close reading of the *Chronicle* may help to define some of his favorite themes as following:

First, *Mamluk court politics*. To the Mamluk ruling regime, al-Biqāʾī was by no means an outsider. As already mentioned above, he was once Sultan Jaqmaq's *ḥadīth* teacher. His long time association with Sultan Īnal was well documented as well: he went on the overseas expeditions with the then Mamluk amir, in 848/1445, and kept in touch with him ever since.[23] After Īnal became the sultan, this relationship flourished. So did al-Biqāʾī's career. His supervision of the renovation of the *waqf* estate of the Khan al-Funduq in Damascus and his legal maneuvers over this lucrative enterprise received the support from Īnal and his son-in-law, the powerful amir Burad-bek al-Qubrusī.[24] To the latter al-Biqāʾī was also a confidant.[25] The Amir traveled intensively all over the realm of the Mamluk sultanate in various capacities. Sometimes he invited al-Biqāʾī to join him as well. Al-Biqāʾī's narratives of these expeditions rely heavily on this Amir's, as well as his own, firsthand accounts.[26] It may not be out of question to note here that this amir is nearly unheard of in Ibn Taghrī Birdī's chronicles. When Īnal died in 865/1461, his son Aḥmad was installed for a short time. Al-Biqāʾī went to salute the new sultan immediately. He not only had a long conversation with him but also dedicated a panegyric to him.[27] He also witnessed, firsthand, the transfer of power to, or the coup by, Khushqadam, through his close relations with Amir Burad-bek. And his account of the event is the most detailed among contemporary sources.[28] Although there is no mention of any direct access that al-Biqāʾī may have had to Sultan Khushqadam at whose reign the *Chronicle* ends, however, he obviously was not ill-informed. He was close to the sultan's secretary Muḥibb al-Dīn b. al-Shiḥna, who was also one of Jaqmaq's old foes.[29] A great deal of information was passed on through him. Al-Biqāʾī apparently enjoyed a well connected network, including the chief judges and the entourage of the sultan (*khawāṣṣ*) as well.[30]

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[23] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 305; ii, 144, 241–42; iii, 215.
[24] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 366; ii, 111–28, 141–44, 341, 394; iii, 268, 271–72.
[25] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 366, 386–87; ii, 112, 218–23.
[26] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 164–67, 362.
[27] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 209–14, 228, 249.
[28] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 275–88.
[29] He was imprisoned by Jaqmaq when he was the Hanafi chief judge of Aleppo; see *Chronicle*, ed., i, 261.
[30] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 317–22, 331, 333, 377, 381; *Chronicle*, ms., 325, 328, 348, 449.

Second, *the ʿulamāʾ community*. The dynamics of competition among the *ʿulamāʾ* over lucrative positions and its ramifications, i.e., anecdotes around the political plots or scholarly debates in the *ʿulamāʾ* community, gossip about the rise and fall of these individuals involved, etc., are given the greatest length in the *Chronicle*. Al-Biqāʾī's accounts on the subject are, to my knowledge, among the most informative. He has an eye for details and intricacies, and certainly has the sources to feed his curiosity. Saʿd al-Dīn b. al-Dayrī, the Ḥanafī chief judge of Cairo, for instance, was his source for the scandals in which some leading *ʿulamāʾ* bribed Jaqmaq to get appointed.[31] Being a Shāfiʿī himself, the intricacies of the Shāfiʿī circles are always given full attention.[32] Likewise, he is not hesitant in letting his voice be heard when it comes to commenting on other scholars' work. One Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Qudsī, for instance, once told al-Biqāʾī about a letter he received from Jerusalem on the matter of ritual ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) issued by the Shāfiʿī chief judge there. Al-Biqāʾī put down the *fatwa* in the *Chronicle* for the record and then called it "extremely ignorant and stupid."[33] Al-Biqāʾī's struggling career forms an essential part of his life and his work. A runner in the race himself, he is not only obsessed with all the episodes in his own fights, but is eager to share his insight with the reader. Not only his scholarly activities are documented in great detail,[34] other related pursuits also draw equal attention. He takes pain, for instance, in describing the legal battle over the excessive taxation upon the Fukahin Mosque in Cairo of which he was the supervisor at the time.[35]

Third, *documents*. While avoiding court trivial protocols, al-Biqāʾī does not ignore institutional, ritual, and official issues. On the contrary, the *Chronicle* is rich in its preservation of documents, which include official communiqués, private correspondence, scholarly speeches and sermons, etc. Among them, the most remarkable might be the letters exchanged between the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II and the Mamluk sultan Īnal in 857/1453, regarding the Ottoman

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[31] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 86–88.

[32] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 25–41, 100–1, 131–35, 330–31.

[33] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 204–5.

[34] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., i, 269–84 (the full text of his lecture at the Muʾayyadiya Madrasa), 381–87 (his discussion with Amir Burad-bek and Damascene scholar Khaṭṭāb al-Ghazawī on *al-amr biʾl-maʿrūf*); ii, 214–24 (his debate with a scholar from the Maghrib over various religious issues), etc.

[35] *Chronicle*, ms. 404–16.

conquest of Constantinople.[36] It is rather intriguing to see that the texts in al-Biqāʾī's version are almost totally different from the official Ottoman version.[37] Neither of these two versions are seen in any other Mamluk sources.[38] Interestingly enough, on other occasions, where letters between Mehmet II and Īnal in 860/1456 are provided by Ibn Taghrī Birdī,[39] al-Biqāʾī is quick to point out that, based on the standard Ottoman chancery practice which he learned from an expert (*al-khabīr*), the so-called "Ottoman letter" in Ibn Taghrī Birdī's version is in fact a forgery (*talfīq*).[40] This letter is not found in Ottoman archives either. It is evident that al-Biqāʾī had access to some Ottoman envoys as well.[41] Moreover, some of this Ottoman-Mamluk correspondence was penned by al-Biqāʾī himself. For instance, he once wrote a letter, on behalf of the Mamluk court, to Aḥmad al-Kawrānī al-Shāfiʿī al-Ḥanafī, the advisor to Mehmet II, in which he outlined the historical events of the reign of Sultan Īnal.[42] And there are a number of letters coming to al-Biqāʾī's attention through the highest ranking officials such as Amir Burad-bek.[43] All these original letters are, to my best knowledge, not found elsewhere. Al-Biqāʾī also shows keen interest in recording other types of documents, such as business transactions, receipts, legal papers, etc.[44] In keeping with his critical attitude, he often verifies those documents, and refutes the "forgeries."[45]

Fourth, *the provinces*. Al-Biqāʾī's coverage of the provinces, especially the Hijaz and Syria, also stands out as one of the best among contemporary sources. The strength of his Hijaz stories lies in his consistent effort to track down the details told by members of the

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[36] The texts of the letters are in *Chronicle*, ed., i, 425–35. Īnal's reply was dated 20 Dhūʾl-Qaʿda, 857 A.H. The Ottoman envoy returned home on 22 Dhūʾl-Qaʿda; see *Chronicle*, ed., i, 440; Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk war, 1485–1491* (Leiden, 1995), 77.

[37] Ahmed Feridun Beg, *Mūnseat al-selatin* (Istanbul, 1857–59), i, 228–32. Mehmet's letter was dated Shaʿban, 857 A.H.

[38] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith* (Beirut edition), 456, only mentions the dispatch of the Mamluk envoy to the Ottoman court; although *al-Nujūm* (Cairo edition), xvi, 71, says that the letters are to be found in the *Ḥawādith*.

[39] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith* (Beirut edition), 574–87.

[40] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 171–74, where a letter dated 2 Dhūʾl-Ḥijja, 859 A.H. is provided.

[41] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 373–74, 376–79; *Chronicle*, ms., 390.

[42] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 400–13.

[43] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 14–15, 236–39.

[44] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 5–9.

[45] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 175–79.

annual pilgrimage caravan returning to Cairo. In this connection, his description of the *maḥmil* caravan provides the most detailed account known so far.[46] Al-Biqāʾī was able to utilize local Hijaz sources as well. For instance, one of the major events during Khushqadam's reign, that is, the murder of Amir Janibak al-Zāhirī, the grand *dawādār* and former governor of Jidda, by the orders of Khushqadam in 867/1463, was reported to al-Biqāʾī by Abū 'l-Faḍl al-Nuwayrī, the *khaṭīb* of Mecca, as well as someone who "was involved in the event" (*lahu mudakhala*).[47] Al-Biqāʾī's Syrian stories are also often supported by his own sources.[48]

Last and not least, *anecdotes and miscellanies*. All serious talk aside, there is also sensationalism, a trademark, so to speak, of al-Biqāʾī's writing. The Cairo gossip mill, of which al-Biqāʾī was obviously an active part, must have churned over all kinds of stories about money, power, and sex, the eternal topics that would fascinate any society, be it medieval or modern. Among the many juicy stories that the *Chronicle* offers is a scandal when Abū Bakr b. ʿAlī al-Fawī al-Jawharī, one of al-Biqāʾī's neighbors and enemies, was caught having sex with a boy in the alley near al-Biqāʾī's house. As if his own witness were not enough, he solicited one Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Shāfiʿī's confirmation about the event and then brought the case to the sultan.[49] Sex scandals appear to be a favorite theme of the *Chronicle* throughout. Al-Biqāʾī is not shy in sharing his private moments, even the family dirty laundry and his personal feuds,[50] either. However, the most touching are perhaps the stories that detail his children's births and deaths. During the years 859/1455–869/1464, at least five boys and two girls were born to his concubines.[51] And he lost four family members to the plague that devastated Cairo in Jumādā I 864/March 1460, and at least three sons to disease and poverty later.[52] Only here, through his vivid and at times emotional recounts of the events, do we sense the humane side of this often bitter man.

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[46] I owe this observation to discussions with John Meloy, who is working on Mamluk economic policy in the Hijaz.

[47] *Chronicle*, ms., 418, 432. For more details of the rivalry between Khushqadam and the two major usurpers Jānim al-Ashrafī and Janibak al-Zāhirī, see "Khuskadam," *EI2*, by P.M. Holt.

[48] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 11–13, 113–14, 204, 301–3, 326–27, 336–37, 338–39.

[49] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 239–44.

[50] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 143–44; iii, 54–55.

[51] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 85–86, 299–300, 367; iii, 42–45; *Chronicle*, ms., 338, 486.

[52] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 117–20, 127; *Chronicle*, ms., 462, 486.

Al-Biqāʾī's care for, or curiosity about, people's lives, or what he calls *asrār ahl al-ʿaṣr*, is also well reflected in his keen observations and vivid descriptions of illnesses, epidemics, as well as the medical/magic treatments.[53] These medical records offer a great deal of rare data for the history of medieval Arab medicine.

The kind of personal nature of al-Biqāʾī's *Chronicle* may also have some bearings on its form. It is noted that the work follows a strict chronological order: all the entries, events and obituaries alike, are indiscriminately put in a sequence as they took place, on a day by day basis. This reveals the probable origin of the work as coming from the author's journal. It also marks quite a departure from the long tradition of Mamluk annalistic writing in which each year is evenly divided into *ḥawādith* (events) and *wafāyāt* (obituaries) sections, a format followed by nearly all of al-Biqāʾī's contemporaries, including his teachers Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ṣayrafī, and Ibn Taghrī Birdī, among others.

Towards a salvation history: reality, Qurʾanic prophecy, and dream symbolism

In addition to the originality of its content, the *Chronicle* is also remarkable for some of its literary devices. As already mentioned above, as a misfit within the *ʿulamāʾ* establishment in Cairo, al-Biqāʾī's personal experiences and psyche had a certain impact on his writing. And as such, the argumentative attitude and combative tone of the *Chronicle* are consonant with its texture, which reveals a framework interwoven with three salient chords: 1) the author's own experiences and the events of his time; 2) his Qurʾanic exegeses and their relation to the actual events in his narrative; and 3) his dream interpretations, which run parallel to his world view. This triangle forms the basic structure of the work.

There are two kinds of Qurʾanic citation in the *Chronicle*: the conventional approach (ad hoc circumstances) and the unconventional one, which interests us here the most. Throughout the work, the

[53] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 42–44 (the strange symptoms his wife suffered during pregnancy, citing authorities from Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Nafīs, to Abū'l-Faḍl al-Bijaʾī), 117–27 (description of the Cairo plague in 864/1460, including his own illness), etc.

record of the author's regular Qurʾan sessions (*al-mīʿād*) is registered meticulously to pinpoint the striking coincidences (in his own words, "*ittifāq gharīb*" or "*gharāʾib al-ittifāq*")[54] between the events of his narrative and the content of the Qurʾanic verses he was teaching at the time these events actually took place. For instance, the expelling of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Abī Bakr al-Ḥusaynī, a *sharīf* and a friend of al-Biqāʾī, from the Hijaz by the rival Banū Haramī in Rajab 855/August 1451 "coincided," as we are told, with al-Biqāʾī's teaching of the verse ". . . *who were expelled from their habitations without right*. . . ."[55] Al-Biqāʾī's own fate is also outlined by the Qurʾanic vision: In Rabīʿ II 853/May 1449, the day he was dismissed from (*khurūjī*) the position at the Zahir Mosque in Cairo, a student asked him about the verse "*when the unbelievers drove him forth* (*akhrajahu*) . . . *he said to his companion, 'Sorrow not, surely God is with us'* . . ."[56] Al-Biqāʾī's redemption came a full circle when he resumed the same position in Jumādā I 857/May 1453, during Sultan Īnal's reign. The Qurʾan chapter he picked up "happened to be," not surprisingly, Noah's triumph, "*Noah called to Us: and how excellent were the Answers!* . . . *They desired to outwit him: so We made them lower ones*."[57] Here, "they" refers, obviously, to al-Biqāʾī's enemies, among them Sultan Jaqmaq; and the reference of Noah is all too clear. Al-Biqāʾī did not hesitate in linking his own experiences to that of the prophets: His son Aḥmad II's birth in Dhūʾl-Qaʿda 865/September 1461 was blessed by the famous Joseph story, which he was teaching on the Friday prior to the boy's birth, "*And the king said, 'I saw in a dream seven fat kine* . . ." which is interpreted as a good omen for "*a year wherein the people will be succored and press in season* . . ."[58] as well as a good year for al-Biqāʾī. An enormous amount of such material is found throughout the entire *Chronicle*, and much of it is charged with obvious political and social implications.[59]

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[54] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 160, 360. For a general discussion of the *ʿajāʾib al-ittifāq* (marvelous coincidences) topoi in Islamic historiography, see T. Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought in the classical period* (Cambridge, 1994), 186, 188, 213.

[55] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 135–36; the citation is from Qurʾan, 22:39–40. I use Arberry's translation.

[56] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 359–60; the citation is from Qurʾan, 9:40.

[57] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 359–60; the citation is from Qurʾan, 37:73–98.

[58] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 355–56; the citation is from Qurʾan, 12:43–57.

[59] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 160; ii, 21–22, 144–45, 243–44, 398; iii, 21–22, 55–56, 126, 216–17, 293–94; *Chronicle*, ms., 334, 336, 390, 416, 418–19, 424, 449, 463, 487, 495, 567–68.

Al-Biqāʾī states explicitly that his use of Qurʾanic verses to project historical events comes as the result of a composition strategy based on his innovative approach to the so-called *ʿilm al-munāsabāt* and its application in historical writing. It is, as he points out, exactly what he saw as the relevance of the Qurʾanic verses he came across at his regular sessions to the actual events around him that inspired him to create a new branch of the *tafsīr*, which he named the *ʿilm munāsabāt al-ayāt*, a discipline unprecedented in *tafsīr* literature (*fann mā raʾaytu man sabaqanī ilayhi*).[60] The order of the Qurʾanic verses, as al-Biqāʾī explains in the introduction to his pioneering work on the subject matter, the *Nazm al-durar*, follows a rather intrinsic sequence, sometimes not necessarily the sequence as we see in the present text of the Scripture as far as the purposes of the suras (*maqsūd al-sūra al-maṭlūb*) are concerned. So, in order to comprehend any particular verses, one must understand these "purposes" attached to them. The study of *ʿilm al-munāsabāt*, therefore, is to unveil the secrets of these "purposes" and ultimately the true meaning of the revelations of the Qurʾan. For al-Biqāʾī, the application of the *ʿilm al-munāsabāt* is not merely an exercise of the traditional *asbāb al-tanzīl* that reveals the circumstances of the revelation of a particular sura on an ad hoc basis, but rather, it attempts to understand those "coherent themes whose beginning and end are organically connected (*amr muttaḥid murtabit awwaluhu bi-akhirih*). And in doing so, the textual sequence of the Qurʾanic verses may not be followed all the time, as can be seen in the cases cited above, but rather, the intrinsic themes of these verses are to be sought after. If the relevance of the Qurʾanic verses to the affairs of this life is self-evident, as al-Biqāʾī argues and illustrates with abundant cases drawn from early Islamic history, then it should be relevant in a later Mamluk setting as well.[61] Here we have a Qurʾan scholar and historian at work, only in one person. The sequence of the Scripture he was *teaching* cycled parallel to the sequence of the affairs of the world he was *living* in. Then the real life experience inspired a theoretical framework that was to be brought back to help explain the vicissitudes, or "secrets" (*asrār*), as al-Biqāʾī would put it, of real life. And as such, many of al-Biqāʾī's own experiences are not at all that personal: they always bear some

[60] *Nazm al-durar*, i, 2; *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 216.
[61] *Nazm al-durar*, i, 6–16; *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 216.

undertone of, and implications for, a larger framework of a Muslim learned man's world view.

Al-Biqāʾī also adds another dimension to this world view, that is, interpretive dreams. Case in point is his reports of the deaths of the two sultans Jaqmaq and Īnal. We are told that when the day of Jaqmaq's death finally came in 857/1453, al-Biqāʾī had a dream in which he saw the sultan turn to a unicorn while he himself was reciting to his students the famous Joseph verse "*Thus We established Joseph in the land that We might teach him the interpretation of events . . .*"[62] This dream-related episode of the Joseph prophecy reoccurs later, and this time in reality. In 865/1461, the ailing Īnal, sensing his death approaching, appointed his son as his successor. The event took place simultaneously as al-Biqāʾī was working on the Joseph verses for his book *Naẓm al-durar*. And on the eve of Īnal's death, al-Biqāʾī reports, he happened to be explaining to the audience in his regular session the Jonah verses "*To every nation a term; when their term comes they shall not put it back by a single hour . . .*" and thought that "should the sultan pass away, this verse ought to be the most fitting." And the sultan died soon.[63] This kind of dream-related story occurs quite frequently in the *Chronicle*, and occasionally they are manifested in others' dreams as well. ʿAlī al-Kurdī, al-Biqāʾī's ally in fighting with a famous scholar from the Maghrib, once told al-Biqāʾī that he received God's support in his dream wherein God said to him, "I love you."[64] The dreams are often closely connected to Qurʾanic prophecy on various occasions. Al-Biqāʾī's engagement to Suʿādat bint Nūr al-Dīn al-Bushī in 858/1454, for instance, "coincided" with the Qurʾanic verses "*Enter Paradise, you and your wives, walking with joy! . . .*" which he was teaching at the time; and the night of the first coition (*al-dukhūl*) was not only blessed by the verses "*This is the similitude of Paradise . . . therein are rivers of water unstaling, rivers of milk unchanging in flavour, and rivers of wine . . .*" but also a dream the bride had shortly afterwards in which she saw a man in "fine white dress" led her and the groom, that is, al-Biqāʾī, to the Paradise described in the Qurʾan and asked the two to take their clothes off.[65] What a dream!

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[62] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 305–6; the citation is from Qurʾan, 12:21.
[63] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 216–17; the citation is from Qurʾan, 10:49.
[64] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 224.
[65] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 21–23; the citations are from Qurʾan, 43:67–70, 47:15, respectively.

Dream symbolism, which has a long tradition in Arab culture and has often been associated with Islamic prophetology,[66] is by no means foreign to al-Biqāʾī's mind set at all. He once attributes his early enlightenment to a vision he experienced as a teenager. In the dream, he saw Gabriel and the Prophet Muḥammad in the forms of two beautiful young men, riding on two green horses heading towards east.[67] His dreams in adulthood are nothing but new episodes on this chain of divine manifestations and his own salvation. He openly, or shamelessly, if one may, draws similarities between himself and the prophets. In reporting his son Muḥammad's birth, he pointedly mentions that the son's birthday was "almost the same of that of the Prophet [Muḥammad]"; and the night he, while in Damascus, received the news of the boy's birth, a dream he had predicated that the "good tiding" was coming. As if this is not enough, one of his fellow *ʿulamāʾ*" told him that he, too, had a dream in which all the signs show that al-Biqāʾī would soon have a son. One of his concubines also reported a dream she had had two days prior to the boy's birth.[68] But, like the mysteries of the life itself, sometimes the divine message is not at all that clear even for al-Biqāʾī (or maybe this is where he had not made his mind up yet as a historian). For instance, the biography of the powerful treasurer of the sultan's fund (*naẓīr al-khāṣṣ*). Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf, a controversial figure towards whom al-Biqāʾī had uneasy mixed feelings (he hated the man, but the latter was a protégé of Sultan Īnal, al-Biqāʾī's patron), concludes with an ambiguous mention of al-Biqāʾī's "fine dreams" about the person as well as the "bad" ones. Although al-Biqāʾī eschewed, perhaps for political considerations, to spell out his own mind ("the truth is with God only!" as he claims), the Qur'anic citation that "coincided" with the man's death did not seem to work well in his favor any way; it reads: "*And who does greater evil than he who forges against God a lie*?" . . . "*Surely the Last Abode is better for those that are god fearing*."[69] Here is where the historian's duty ends and the reader's

[66] A useful bibliography of dream and dream interpretation in Islam is to be found in Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A companion* (London, 1994), 320, note 25; to this list one may add: T. Fahd, *Le Livre des Songes* (Damascus, 1964); idem., *La divination arabe* (Paris, 1987); G. Saliba's review of Y. Gouda, "Dreams and Their Meaning in the Old Arab Tradition", *JAOS*, 56 (1997), 213–14.

[67] *Naẓm al-durar*, i, 4–5.

[68] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 85–89.

[69] *Chronicle*, ed., ii, 391–98; the citation is from Qur'an, 6:22–32.

pondering begins. This is a fine case of the "undecided dreams," which may not as bad as those "confused dreams" that fall into another category in Arab dream interpretation.[70]

We are left with even more questions: Why such supernatural topois and apocalyptic visions are presented in a historical work that was aimed, first and foremost, at chronicling the events of *this world*? What did the author attempt to achieve by combining the Qur'anic sequential prophecy and dream symbolism with his narrative? Since it is hard to read al-Biqā'ī's mind, only speculations can be offered here. It appears to me that, first, on a practical level, al-Biqā'ī's detailed accounts of his Qur'an sessions and the progress of writing his manual of the *'ilm al-munāsabāt*, i.e., the *Naẓm al-durar*, may well originated as a sort of syllabus or memo for his record (given the fact that the only extant manuscript is a work-in-progress draft). Then when these materials were put together, they certainly struck the author for the, in his own words, "surprising relatedness" that linked them one way or another. In this regard, one might cast doubt on the veracity of all the "coincidences" cited by al-Biqā'ī and thus disqualify the merit of mixing such a far-fetched ahistoric methodology into a historical framework. However, al-Biqā'ī's citations of the Qur'anic verses, for one thing, do follow, in most of the cases, a reasonably established sequence (or several rounds of sequence). Since it was likely that each of al-Biqā'ī's teaching session would cover a cluster of Qur'anic text at a time, he surely had the liberty of quoting the verses relevant to his purposes while omitting others. And after all, the textual sequence of the Scripture is not the point here any way. It is those inner themes that matter. And second, on a philosophical level, al-Biqā'ī's version of history, or his *ideal* of historical writing, surely go beyond simply reporting factual events. Citing the past to legitimate present and future is a commonplace for historians. In this regard, Qur'anic prophecy and dream symbolism are perhaps the most commonly employed techniques in Islamic literature, not only because they help to transfer the reality into an idealized view of the past but also, and more importantly, to unveil the secret of the future. At times of turning point or crisis, dreams of prophecy are always there to reveal the Heavenly Plan, to comfort, or to warn.[71] It appears that in his own efforts to

[70] For the "confused dreams," cf. Irwin, *Arabian Nights*, 194–95.

[71] Examples of dream interpretation in Islamic historiography can be found in

contextualize the causes and motivations behind all these events of his narrative, the conventional approach of Qur'anic citation, albeit still useful, no longer met his purposes fully, and what he was looking for is, perhaps, a prophecy that was organically and systematically linked to his own experiences. In this direction, al-Biqā'ī certainly took one step further. Although he was not the first one, nor the last, in this long Islamic tradition, the difference he has made here is *proportion* and *quantity*. Never before have we seen a historian, at least not a Mamluk one, use such technique so intensively and systematically. In other words, neither Qur'anic exegeses nor Islamic prophetology or dream interpretation are known as having played the central role in shaping the basic structure of a history work as we see in al-Biqā'ī's case.

The apocalyptic overtones in the *Chronicle* are, therefore, not accidental and must be integrated here into interpretations of the author's world view and his way to convey it to his reader. This naturally prompts us to further explore the issue within a larger context, that is, the ongoing discourse on the so-called "Islamic salvationist history."

The question of "Islamic salvation history" has been revisited recently. Bernd Radtke, for instance, has drawn the attention to a Muslim "Salvationist world-history" derived from a "Islamic cosmology." In this history, "the veracity of a particular narrative rests more upon *the personality of its narrator* or transmitter than upon personal reasoning (italic mine)."[72] Another Mamluk scholar Otfried Weintritt echoes this notion by stating that "the re-interpretation" and "specific perception" of the historical event is "predicated upon the Medieval Islamic concept of salvation history" and this trend is clearly seen in some authors' "eagerness to close the gap between the experience of the historical reality and *the ideal concept* of salvation history (italic mine)."[73] If the central theme of this "Islamic salvation history" is, as Radtke and Weintritt argue, the concept of the intrinsical superiority of the Muslims to the unbelievers and, in the

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A. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A source-critical study*, trans. M. Bonner (Princeton, 1994), 212; J. Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory: An inquiry into the art of 'Abbasid apologetics* (New Haven, 1986), 19ff., 66f., 104, 110, 114; M. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 127, 133, 251–52. I thank Paula Sanders for drawing my attention to Lassner's work.

[72] *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung im mittelalterlichen Islam* (Beirut, 1992).

[73] *Formen spätmittelalterlicher islamischer Geschichtsdarstellung: Untersuchungen zu an-Nuwairi al-Iskandaranis Kitab al-Ilman und verwandten zeitgenössischen Texten* (Beirut, 1992).

early Mamluk context, the external enemies, i.e., the Crusaders and the Mongols, for al-Biqāʾī, who lived in a later time, it was more about the internal threats to the realm, about the concept of the superiority of the righteous Muslim scholars (himself included of course) and just rulers (such as Sultan Īnal) to those unjust rulers (such as Sultan Jaqmaq), corrupt officers, and phony *ʿulamāʾ*. As a historian at a time when external threats were winding down and diplomatic relationships with the neighbors were relatively stable, the paramount concern for him was naturally the internal turmoil and self-destruction that was eating away the already feeble Mamluk system (*fasād, zulm* are the buzzwords in the *Chronicle* throughout). A historian's job was not to offer solutions, but rather, to borrow Radtke's words, he "admonishes and educates the soul by teaching the truth."[74] In al-Biqāʾī's eyes, the decline of the Mamluk system was very much a process from within. And his own experiences were living proof of it. In his own life, he lost many battles against his enemies, just as the Muslims were sometimes defeated by the unbelievers; however, the salvation version of the history confirms his superiority over his enemies, like that of the Muslims over the unbelievers, and the eventual triumph is, in both cases, predictable by the Heavenly Plan. In reaching such goals, a wide range of literary topois and rhetorical devices: personal journal, Qurʾanic prophecy, dream interpretation, etc., all come in handy. They all serve to underline the significance of the events and to highlight the marvels of al-Biqāʾī's, and his patrons', triumphs over the hypocrites. In this context, the central concept of "righteous vs. evil" is ubiquitous. And as such, nothing is out of context, and nothing is far-fetched. And from a psychological perspective, for a man like al-Biqāʾī who had been struggling all his way, what could be more assuring and comforting than showing the divine support for his and his fellow good Muslims' cause?

A tale of two sultans: Jaqmaq and Īnal

The Islamic concept of a salvation history has expressed itself in various ramifications. With al-Biqāʾī, the parameter of the superiority

[74] *Weltgeschichte*, 543.

of the Muslims to the unbelievers extends, as mentioned above, to that of the just rulers to unjust ones, that of the "pure," idealized scholars to corrupted and phony ones, etc. In this regard, his depiction of Sultans Jaqmaq and Īnāl offers a case study of such a concept and its application in historical writing.

Among the later Mamluk sultans, Jaqmaq is one of a few to receive exclusively positive words from mainstream historiography. Modern scholarship, on the other hand, has not yet paid much attention to this sultan, except an *EI* article that echoes the praises by al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī, and Ibn Iyās.[75] It is, therefore, quite astonishing when one turns to al-Biqāʾī's portrayal of the sultan, only to find a completely different person. The "exceedingly frugal and pious man," as the mainstream sources make us to believe, turns out to be a debauched, fatuous, and self-indulgent tyrant. It is, of course, not difficult to discern al-Biqāʾī's hostility towards Jaqmaq, given his experiences with the latter. What interests us here is the process, i.e., the way of presentation, in which Beauty became the Beast. And in a larger context, it prompts a general question: How far a historian could go in pursuing his own agenda and, in the mean time, presenting history as objectively as possible?

As stated above, al-Biqāʾī's sentiment against Jaqmaq is extraordinarily personal. And so is his character assassination, so to speak, of the latter in the *Chronicle*. In order to reach such a goal, he not only uses devices of plain *narration* but also that of dramatized *illustration*, all accomplished with a twofold strategy.

First is to damage the image of the sultan by scandalizing anecdotes and critical comments. His account of Jaqmaq's marriage in Rabīʾ I 855/April 1451 offers a good example. The event is reported by Ibn Taghrī Birdī in one sentence, simply stating that the sultan was engaged on such-and-such day.[76] Al-Biqāʾī's story, however, is lengthy and sensational: We learn that the bride-to-be was in fact originally engaged to the Sultan's son, and the Sultan, captivated by her beauty, decided to marry her for himself. He ordered the Shāfiʿī chief judge to authorize the engagement and that the latter refused to do so, citing the inappropriateness of such an act in Shāfiʿī law because the girl was to young to be bound to such obligation. The

[75] "Cakmak," *EI2*, by M. Sobernheim. (There is a typo: his death date was 857/1453, not 854/1453.) Al-Biqāʾī himself also admitted that Ibn Taghrī Birdī was in favor of Jaqmaq; see *Chronicle*, ms., 595.

[76] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith* (Beirut edition), 323.

sultan, we are told, went ahead any way and had the Ḥanafī chief judge perform the ceremony instead. The story did not end here. The Shāfiʿī judge, as al-Biqāʾī pointedly informs us, later paid the price for his disobedience dearly. As if this is not sensational enough, al-Biqāʾī later gives an even juicier follow-up: on the wedding night, Jaqmaq, well into his late seventies, was so impotent (a symptom with rich implications) that the only thing the dirty old man was able to accomplish, while trying hard, was to keep kissing the bride. As a result, al-Biqāʾī wryly reports, "it was said that" the poor girl's lips turned swollen.[77] Talk about today's tabloid journalism? One looking for Mamluk political-sexual scandals surely will not be disappointed with al-Biqāʾī. A court plot, we learn, was launched by the Shāfiʿī chief judge Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Manawī to remove the above-mentioned treasurer of the sultan's fund Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf. The motion was backed by deputy of public treasury al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī. The story becomes interesting when Yūsuf, described by al-Biqāʾī as "the smartest Copt ever seen," found out that al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī was at the time secretly married to the daughter of the former sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Tatar who, in her turn, had once been engaged to Jaqmaq. Although the marriage was never consummated due to Jaqmaq's getting cold feet later, al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī was still held accountable for breaking the taboo by putting his hand on "the sultan's woman." The "smartest Copt" wasted no time to reveal the secret to Jaqmaq and thus successfully gained the sultan's confidence and secured his job.[78] The Sultan, al-Biqāʾī tries to convince us, was far from being "frugal and pious." Al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī, who lost a round in the above-mentioned court skirmish, managed to get his lucrative appointment renewed after paying the sultan 10,000 dinars.[79] In the *Chronicle*, records showing Jaqmaq receiving bribes from individuals seeking for positions are legion. In Rabīʿ I 856/March 1452, for instance, the position of the sultan's secretary was vacant after the death of al-Barizi. Numerous *ʿulamāʾ* campaigned for the job which, al-Biqāʾī reveals, eventually went to the one that picked up the highest price tag: 20,000 dinars.[80]

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[77] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 102–3, 123. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's report of the sultan's consummation of the marriage has only eight words; see *Ḥawādith* (Beirut edition), 327.

[78] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 167–68.

[79] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 169. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, on the other hand, stated that the payment was merely in thousands; see *Ḥawādith* (Beirut edition), 343.

[80] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 194.

Al-Biqāʾī claims that he was not the only one that had been victimized by Jaqmaq's "deception and betrayal of his own folks." Take the fate of the prominent al-Bārizī family as an example: The father Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Bārizī, the secretary of Sultan al-Muʾayyad Shaykh, was instrumental in Jaqmaq's ascending from the position of a mamluk to Atabeg under Sultan Barsbay. His son Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad not only married off his sister to Jaqmaq, but once helped him by putting his own property as security deposit for the debt Jaqmaq owed. However, when Jaqmaq became sultan, Kamāl al-Dīn was constantly humiliated and mistreated, and died miserably.[81] Al-Biqāʾī's list of the prominent statesmen and *ʿulamāʾ* who suffered from Jaqmaq's mistreatments includes his former teacher Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (who was once threatened by Jaqmaq to be put on a donkey parading on the streets of Cairo), the Ḥanafī chief judge Saʿd al-Dīn b. al-Dayrī, and the Shāfiʿī chief judge ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Ṣāliḥ b. al-Sarrāj al-Bulqīnī, among others. Jaqmaq's disregard for, and rude treatment of, religious people is well illustrated by al-Biqāʾī in the following incident: Jaqmaq once commissioned a scholar to teach al-Bukhārī's ḥadīth collection. He not only abruptly shortened the session, but fell short in the promised compensation and robes of honors to the teachers and the students.[82] Jaqmaq's betrayal also extended to his own family. In commenting on Jaqmaq's orders, in Jumādā I 856/February 1461, to cut off the pension paid to his ex-wife, the daughter of the Ottoman ruler Mehmet II, whom he had divorced several years ago, al-Biqāʾī simply calls it "the meanest thing ever heard of."[83]

Al-Biqāʾī's contempt for Jaqmaq, which he makes no effort to hide, is so strong that even the sultan's wife cannot escape his ridicule. She, as we are told, once hosted a banquet honoring a group of noble Mamluk ladies. A drink called *subiya* was offered. All the guests, as a result, got intoxicated; some of them started fighting each other, while others fell down from the donkeys and sedans that carried them back.[84]

Another strategy utilized by al-Biqāʾī to damage Jaqmaq is to target the negative stories of the era as indications to the sultan's failed

[81] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 218, 303–4.
[82] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 304–5.
[83] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 217.
[84] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 208–9.

leadership. Tireless efforts are made throughout the *Chronicle* to link all the chaos and turmoil of the reign to the sultan. For instance, in reporting a fatal robbery, al-Biqāʾī blames the increase of crimes to high inflation in Cairo and the Sultan's ignoring of people's welfare.[85] The year 855/1451–52 is summarized by al-Biqāʾī as "a year that saw pervasive ruin and corruption."[86] Even regarding some good news, e.g., prices went down for a while, the sultan does not get any credit for it.[87] But he is surely to blame for all the bad things happening during his regime. For instance, there are the embezzlement charges against the above-mentioned al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī, regarding the manufacture of the covering of the Kaʿba (*al-kiswa*). Al-Biqāʾī charges that the total cost of the manufacture was 2,000 dinars but al-Sharaf al-Anṣārī billed 7,000 dinars instead, and that bad fabric was used to replace the expensive silk. Jaqmaq, however, let him get away with it because the stupid sultan could not even tell the difference when the *kiswa* was shown to him.[88] Jaqmaq's many misjudgments in his governing were, as al-Biqāʾī sees it, the cause of the turmoil of the era. His unjustified partisanship among the rival factions, for instance, was the direct cause of the massacre in Hawran, Syria, in which 200 men were killed. The rival tribes were led by, respectively, Maqlad, who was, in al-Biqāʾī's words, "brave, virtuous, and well beloved by his people," a quality that Jaqmaq could not stand, and Ibn Qudaym, a relative of Jaqmaq, who received the sultan's support. Ibn Qudaym went on to be appointed the governor of Hawran but the angry mass pelted him with rocks.[89]

Al-Biqāʾī summarizes Jaqmaq's legacy as the following:

> This man was the problem of the era (*mushkilat al-dahr*) insofar as the majority of people see him as full of contradiction. He could be at times on the top of charitable deeds, but all of a sudden he was down the bottom of evils. Only a few insightful and intelligent men know the truth about this man: he was bold and audacious, rational (*ʿāqil*) [not a positive word as will be seen below,], and shrewd, sly and sophisticated, extremely tough, having the innate property of (*maṭbūʿ ʿalā*) evil, tyranny, malice, and jealousy; he despised people. He had a penchant for collecting money by all means, and spending it like water.

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[85] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 67.
[86] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 163.
[87] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 216–17.
[88] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 353.
[89] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 112–14.

> He loved to hurt people, especially religious men, on top of them the leading scholars (*aʾyān*).[90]

Al-Biqāʾī is, of course, more sophisticated than simply casting stones at a dead body. He then goes on to bridge the apparent discrepancy between his view of the Sultan and the mainstream positive portrayal of him. And in doing so, he first sets his tone in a buzzword "contradictions" to characterize Jaqmaq's hypocritical behavior and then proceeds *mutanaqida* to zero in the real truth of the man. Al-Biqāʾī explains that before Jaqmaq seized the throne,

> the fear of falling from power had smothered his toughness and hid his [evil] nature. Therefore, he walked the rational line (*yasiru bi-ʿaqlih*) by persisting on charitable deeds to good people, among them the *ʿulamāʾ*, virtuous men, and the poor. He [mis]led them and won their hearts by showing [to them] his ascetic, frugal, and simple lifestyle. So the majority of people came to the conclusion that he was extremely pious, gracious, and righteous.

In other words, Jaqmaq, in al-Biqāʾī's view, was doing the *taqiya*. But once he seized power and became Sultan, "the fear [of falling from power] vanished, and the ugly side [of him] returned, and [his evil] nature came back gradually."[91] And the older he got, the worse. Thus the last three years of his reign, namely 855/1451–857/1453 were, in al-Biqāʾī's assessment, "the worst and most harmful."

Īnal, on the other hand, enters al-Biqāʾī's stage with a totally different perspective. The sultan, often referred to by al-Biqāʾī as "my friend,"[92] is usually presented by Mamluk sources as a controversial figure. He is portrayed, on the one hand, as a ruler successful in his diplomatic dealings with the Ottomans, the Aqquyunlus, and the Franks in Cyprus, and whose regime saw prosperity thanks to his monetary reform; but on the other, his legacy is commonly viewed as having marred with a series of severe errors and bad judgments in governing. In this regard, Ibn Taghrī Birdī's presentation maybe representative. Ibn Taghrī Birdī makes it clear that he intends to do fair to Īnal, and that, overall, the latter's merits (*maḥāsin*) outweigh his wrongdoing (*masāwīʾ*).[93] However, his focus appears to be very much on the latter, and his portrayal of Īnal is overall critical

[90] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 302–3.
[91] *Chronicle*, ed., i, 303.
[92] E.g., *Chronicle*, ed., i, 305, 359, 412–13.
[93] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Al-Nujūm* (Cairo edition), xvi, 157.

and negative, albeit restrained in its tone. After a brief mention of Īnal's accomplishments in domestic and foreign affairs, Ibn Taghrī Birdī quickly moves to unveil his dark side. The major criticisms are: 1) His greediness in excessively collecting revenues, which opened the doors for corruption; 2) his lack of interest in Islamic learning; 3) his handling of state affairs that often ran counter to the Shariʿa; and 4) the continuous deterioration of the security of Cairo and the countryside. The situation only worsened, in Ibn Taghrī Birdī's view, due to Īnal's unchecked reliance on the so-called *Ajlab* Mamluks (the mamluks of the ruling sultan), who committed numerous crimes and constantly ran head-on with the *ʿulamāʾ* establishment. Īnāl is also to blame for letting his son, wife, and son-in-law, the overmighty Buradbek (who was al-Biqāʾī's patron, if one remembers), hold power and make major decisions.[94]

Ibn Taghrī Birdī's portrayal of Īnāl also has a traditional Islamic physiognomic flavor. The sultan's pale and lanky outlook, combined with his dark skin and the black gown he was wearing, was not only unpleasant, but "unacceptable in the eyes" of many. His soft and effeminate voice also fueled speculations that he was a bisexual, fond of handsome young men.[95] Although Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not press this matter further, the fact that he, as a court historian, decided to run such a story in the first place surely says a lot.

It is thus interesting to see how al-Biqāʾī responded to these accusations in Īnāl's defense. It is at this point that al-Biqāʾī has demonstrated his savvy in negotiating between his "salvationist" stand and the reality check. If his depiction of Jaqmaq is somehow black-and-white negative, Īnāl's image and legacy under his pen are more complicated. Al-Biqāʾī's short biography of Īnāl sounds more or less like today's defense lawyer's argument on behalf of his client.

> Despite that people hold strong opinions about him, they all remember his merits: his patience, self-control, and tolerance, his staying away from any evil doings. . . . It's true that his mamluks tyrannized over () people, but it was precisely because the sultan had refrained himself *tasallaṭa* . . . *ʿalā* from evil doings. . . . He was a man of chivalry, soft spoken, and totally devoid of atrocity (*al-faḥsh*).

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[94] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Ḥawādith* (California edition), viii, 782–3.

[95] Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Al-Nujūm* (Cairo edition), xvi, 157–59; (California edition), vii, 557–62.

Perhaps realizing this all-praise statement may get backfired, al-Biqāʾī then adds a marginal note to the main paragraph in the manuscript:

> However, he (i.e., Īnāl) was not well known for showing regards to (*taʿzīm*) the *ʿulamāʾ* and virtuous people, and that's simply because he did not know them well. He did not pay attention to(?)[96] the establishment of the minaret of the Shariʿa in that he would go along with the flow(?)[97] and give blind submission to (*tamām al-inqiyād li*) his wife. As a result, she acted haphazardly in [interfering with] his rulings from inside, and so did some good-looking *Ajlab* [Mamluks] from outside. This really ruined his good reputation.[98]

This follow-up is noteworthy for it offers an insight into al-Biqāʾī's methodology. The heat of strong criticism from mainstream historiography regarding Īnāl's legacy obviously prompted al-Biqāʾī to elaborate on the matter in a more sophisticated way. All the major issues raised by Ibn Taghrī Birdī are answered accordingly, point by point. On the top of these are Īnāl's responsibility for the wide-spread corruption in Egypt and his distancing himself from the *ʿulamāʾ* community. Al-Biqāʾī's defense of Īnāl here, in contrast to his fierce attack on Jaqmaq, is rather subdued and rational. In this portion of the *Chronicle*, he does not deny many of the factual truth of the negative stories, but avoids harsh criticism of the sultan, putting the blame, instead, on his *Ajlab* Mamluks and those people around him, especially his wife (but not Amir Burad-bek!).[99] Nor does he get sensational. Rumours of Īnāl's penchant for young men, a perfect topic for gossips which al-Biqāʾī generally loves, are largely let go, except for a quick allusion.

The discrepancy between al-Biqāʾī's and Ibn Taghrī Birdī's accounts here is more in interpretation than in historicity. In this connection, the "good guy and bad guy" scenario proves to be no novel in late Mamluk historiography.[100] Why is it so? In al-Biqāʾī's case, it is

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[96] The word is not clear in the manuscript; the edition (*Chronicle*, ed., iii, 215) has a conjectural reading of *muhtamman*.

[97] The word in the manuscript appears to be *y-n-b-z*; the edition reads *yunbazu*; I am not quite sure about this reading nor the meaning of the word.

[98] *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 215–16.

[99] For al-Biqāʾī's negative reports and criticism of the *Ajlab* Mamluks during Īnal's reign, see *Chronicle*, ed., iii, 47–48, 72–73, 84, 86–88, 108, 111–12, 171–72, 197, 204.

[100] E.g., Carl Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The reigns of the Mamluk sultans al-Ashraf Qaytbay and Qansuh al-Ghawri in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993); idem., *Protectors or Praetorians?: The last Mamluk sultans and Egypt's waning as a great power* (Albany, 1994).

apparent that it has to do, first and foremost, with the author's pragmatic motivation, that is, his own redemption. Writing chronicle provides him with an opportunity not only to express his personal sentiments, but also to justify his cause, in that all the fortunes and misfortunes he encountered along the way have largely to do with his gaining grace and falling into disgrace under these two sultans. We may also view this on a philosophical level, that is, al-Biqāʾī's savationist world view in which the blessed ones (Īnāl, his son al-Malik al-Muʾayyad, al-Biqāʾī himself, etc.) and the cursed ones (Jaqmaq, among others) are all situated in their places according to the Heavenly Plan. Al-Biqāʾī's attacks on some individuals are so outrageous that they prompt counterattacks right on the site: A number of marginal notes written by some later hands are found throughout the manuscript, expressing their authors' dismay and anger towards al-Biqāʾī.[101] This kind of "hostile notes" are, to my knowledge, not often seen in medieval Arabic manuscripts. This fact may also help to explain why is that the *Chronicle* has long been ignored by mainstream bibliographers and has never made it to wide circulation.

In this connection, although the reciprocal criticism and attacks among the *ʿulamāʾ* are as ancient as Islamic historiography itself, al-Biqāʾī's and Ibn Taghrī Birdī's outspoken criticism and fierce attacks on the two sultans, albeit taking totally contradictory positions, invite us to wonder since when did Mamluk historians begin to feel comfortable expressing their critical opinions on living rulers? And how far could they go? At least in Ibn Taymiya's time, things looked quite differently. Ibn Taymiya's notion that a bad ruler is better than no ruler is,[102] for one thing, quite consistent with our reading of the early Mamluk chronicles in which the sultans remain largely to be praised. These might be the questions that go beyond the scope of this paper; and they certainly merit more attention in future research. Our current discussion shows that at least in al-Biqāʾī's and Ibn Taghrī Birdī's time, there was a certain degree of latitude enjoyed by historians to comment on the living rulers, just as the kind of the freedom they have always enjoyed when it comes to judging their peer *ʿulamāʾ*. It is unlikely that al-Biqāʾī would fabricate any of

[101] These notes are written on the margins of *Chronicle*, ms., 139, 163, 183, 191, 220, 222, 227, 460. They are omitted altogether in the present edition.

[102] Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford, 1981), 145–46.

the stories in his writing, but he certainly had the liberty to comment on, and, moreover, to decide what to report and what not to. It is all about information processing or manipulating, if one may, as we see all too often nowadays.

Further research is needed in determining how far al-Biqāʾī's intriguing *Chronicle* would revolutionize our understanding of the era it covers (or we may have not much understanding of it to begin with). The present study, preliminary notwithstanding, shows that it is an important and indispensable source of the political, social, religious, intellectual, and cultural history of a transitional era that is among the least explored by modern scholarship. And on a larger scale, some of its textual devices also provide fascinating examples of the fresh air of divergence and the vitality of critical spirits in the cultural environment of the Mamluk era which has long been perceived as stagnant and monotonous.

AL-MAQRĪZĪ, THE MASTER, AND ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-QUDSĪ, THE DISCIPLE—WHOSE HISTORICAL WRITING CAN CLAIM MORE TOPICALITY AND MODERNITY?

Ulrich Haarmann

Narrativity and Muslim historiography

The Klio of the Muslims is a poetess. Taking up Hayden White's well known dictum on the quintessentially literary character of historiography one has to state that this fundamental, if controversial, insight has not struck root in our field. The post-structuralist debate on the primordial fictionality of historical writing, however "objective" their authors have striven to be, has left surprisingly few and faint vestiges in the scholarly debate on Muslim historical literature so far. Certainly some pivotal studies have appeared which take direct recourse to White and his theses on the rhetorical patterns governing any historiographical discourse. I mention the late Marilyn Waldman's brief article on the year 711 in Muslim historiographical tradition, a year which is so richly laden with myths and happenings.[1] A second essay is Gabriel Piterberg's investigation into the different renderings of the fatal events of 1622/23 in Ottoman contemporary historical texts, some of which remained controlled by the authors, whereas others gained autonomy from their "fathers".[2] Other scholars have taken up White's general concern, which grew out of an intrinsically European context, and posed the question whether his tropology and his other analytical tools and categories can meaningfully be transferred to Muslim historiography. I mention Aziz al-Azmeh,[3]

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[1] "The otherwise Unnoteworthy Year 711": A Reply to Hayden White", *Critical Inquiry* 7, (1981), 784–92.

[2] "Speech acts and written texts: a reading of a seventeenth-century Ottoman historiographic episode", *Poetics today* 14 (1993), 387–418.

[3] "Histoire et narration dans l'historiographie arabe", *Annales ESC*, mars-avril 1986, nr 2, 411–31.

Ludwig Ammann,[4] Stephan Conermann[5] and Christoph Herzog.[6]

But time is running short for all those who want to make such comparisons. White's paradigm is in danger of passing into oblivion even before non European areas of research have fully profitted from it. The powerfully emerging new scepticism vis-à-vis the salience of the much-debated linguistic and literary turn—I only mention the recent plea by Richard J. Evans for the reappraisal of historiography as a repository of truthful information—may well overtake any such belated efforts at testing the criterion of facticity vs. narrativity in the study of Muslim historical reports.

One consequence of this new school of historical thinking, however, is guaranteed to remain valid also for our latecoming field. As students of medieval Islamic history we will have to bid farewell for good, whether we like it or not, to the familiar idea that pre-modern representations of "what really happened" can be judged and ranked according to the standards of truth and precision as they were claimed by the authors themselves. Such an objectivity is a hoax. For as many as four prisms separate us from the full sight and cognizance of these past events. The medieval chronicler both choses and mirrors his subject according to the cultural norms governing him and his time. And the modern researcher is none the less subject to the same refractions and limitations, which are conditioned both by his individual personality and by the conventions and the taste of his proper age.

This insight has tangible results for the student of Mamluk historiography, a field which is known to be extremely rich. It suffices to throw a glance at Brockelmann's bulky *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*[7] to realize this exceptional plethora. We cannot judge whether a text is good—and therefore warrants a critical edition or scholarly study- or whether it is bad—and therefore deserves to remain buried in Brockelmann's repertory- solely on the basis of its formal consis-

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[4] "Kommentiertes Literaturverzeichnis zu Zeitvorstellungen und geschichtlichem Denken in der islamischen Welt", *Welt des Islams* 37 (1997), 28–86, esp. 54.

[5] "Einige allgemeine Überlegungen zum vormodernen" "Historischen Denken" der Araber", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 93 (1998), 141–57.

[6] *Geschichte und Ideologie: Mehmed Murad und Celal Nuri über die historischen Ursachen des osmanischen Niedergangs.* (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen vol. 199), Berlin 1996, 1–9.

[7] Vol. II, Leiden 1943, 28–63 [35–74]; *Supplementband* vol. II, Leiden 1938, 24–66.

tency, for the exactitude of its names, dates and quantitative statements, nor even because of its originality, leave alone the linguistic impeccability of its Arabic text. We rather have to pose new questions. May not a historical text punctuated with narratives from the *Arabian Nights* or the *Sīrat Baybars* be closer to the past as it was experienced by the contemporaries than a chronicle which proceeds stiffly and meticulously from year to year, or even day to day, but which is equally reductionist and, as a consequence of the refraction mentioned above, equally non-factual? The fictionality of such a high-standard chronicle could be construed to be only better veiled than this is the case in a text which ostensibly and visibly violates the traditional historiographical aesthetic and structural conventions.

I have given this lengthy preface because I want to solicit curiosity for a chronicler of late fifteenth century Cairo on whom I have worked for quite some time and who has struck his contemporaries and modern students alike for exactly these deficits in scholarly ethos, stylistic competence etc. He is Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī or al-Maqdisī, who died in 888/1483. He was definitely no great mind, not even a gifted craftsman in his profession as a chronicler, certainly not in all phases of his career. More than this, he was the proud student and transmitter of some writings of his famous teacher al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442). Yet whereas al-Maqrīzī has always, rightly or not, been held in highest esteem for his precision, factualness and learnedness, Abū Ḥāmid by contrast liberally discloses his own weaknesses according to these very standards.

One can easily see this in all those cases where he uses his master's texts and where we have the chance of direct comparison. *Here* the serious, competent, and judicious original al-Maqrīzī, and *there* the sloppy imitator Abū Ḥāmid who all too often audaciously distorts the data presented by the great master. The question, however, remains: is this negligent, not exceptionally erudite and certainly not very smart scholar whom the contemporaries derided and mocked at unabashedly, in the totality of his message not perhaps a "truer" witness to his time than the sober, maybe even impeccable, yet in his way inevitably also myopic al-Maqrīzī? It certainly strikes the student that, all the contempt of his colleagues notwithstanding, also Abū Ḥāmid's works were read and appreciated in his time. We keep discovering new texts of his, of which the biographical dictionaries of the time (otherwise so comprehensive and meticulous) remain silent.

The Life of an Outsider

What do we know about Abū Ḥāmid? Even though he has been familiar to the field of Mamluk studies, at the latest ever since Michael Cook[8] and myself[9] had a dispute over the proper assessment of his personality some ten years ago, it may be helpful to briefly sketch his scholarly career and to accomodate his historiographical output in the context of his vita, particularly since we have gained so much new information about his oeuvre in the past decade.

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Khalīl al-Qudsī/al-Maqdisī al-Shāfiʿī was born in 817/1414 or 819/1416 in Ramla in Palestine of Egyptian parents. Egypt is the source of his second *nisba* al-Bilbaysī; Bilbays was the medieval administrative center of the eastern Nile delta. His father, who, for some time, served as *mufti* in Ramla, was a timekeeper (*muwaqqit*); hence Abū Ḥāmid's alternative name Ibn al-Muwaqqit. Abū Ḥāmid first followed his teacher Aḥmad b. Raslān (Arslān) al-Qudsī (d. 844/1440), whom the contemporaries lauded for his scholarly acumen and his impressive personality, to Jerusalem. Later on, by now in his late twenties, he moved to Cairo, this time in the company of the no less renowned Qāḍī al-Bārizī. There he, at least initially, settled in the famous Khanqah Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ. In Cairo he continued his studies of law and grammar and acquired a broad training also in the religious sciences, in arithmetic, logic and even in the intricate methodology of scholarly research, the *adab al-baḥth*. The Shafi'i chief judge Shams al-Dīn al-Qāyātī (d. 850/1446) was one of his teachers. Judging from Abū Ḥāmid's writings, history must, however, have been his favourite domain. One may want to add that the mystical ambience of the Khanqah Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ left visible traces in several of Abū Ḥāmid's writings.

In the hectic atmosphere of late fifteenth-century Cairo's academe where countless scholars vied for jobs and sinecures at the numerous colleges, mosques and mausolea, Abū Ḥāmid did not prosper nor thrive. Again and again he solicited a salaried position—mostly, so it seems, in vain. The apogee of his career seems to have been

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[8] "Abu Hamid al-Qudsi", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 28 (1983), 85–97, here 92.

[9] "*Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs*—Changing *'ulama'* attitudes towards Mamluk rule in the late fifteenth century", *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988), 61–77, here 72–3.

the position of reader of *ḥadīth* at a mosque in the newly founded[10] Cairo suburb of Bulaq. Correspondingly he suffered from permanent indigence (*fāqa*) and could afford to marry only at a relatively advanced age (which did not prevent him from eventually having a large family). We only have few dates from his later life. In January 1450 he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. He died in 888/1483 and was buried in the precinct of the Khanqah Saʿīd al-Suʿadāʾ.[11]

Abū Ḥāmid has survived both in his own historical texts, seven so far, and in the poignant statements which some of his contemporaries have made about him. We shall now turn to both these types of sources.

Variety and contradictions in Abū Ḥāmid's historical writings

As has just been said, a total of seven historical works written by Abū Ḥāmid are known to be preserved even though Brockelmann's *Geschichte* or similar reference works do not present them as an assembly, provided they mention them at all.

(a) The oldest work known so far goes back to the year 868/1463–4 when Sultan Khushqadam (865/1461–872/1467) was still ruling. It is a treatise on the proper structure of society. It is slavishly patterned after Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 771/1370) famous book *Muʿīd al-niʿam wa-mubīd al-niqam*. This work, which is preserved in a Berlin unique manuscript, has remained unpublished so far and carries the flowery title: *Badhl al-naṣāʾiḥ al-sharʿiyya fīma ʿalā ʾl-sulṭān wa-wulāt al-umūr wa-sāʾir al-raʿiya*, "Ample legal advice for the ruler, for those in command, and for all subjects".[12] We are instructed in it in all detail not only about the functions the market-inspector (*muḥtasib*) has to perform in a metropolis like Cairo but are also introduced to a total of 114 professions (mind the sacred figure!), from sultan to policeman, from oculist to undertaker. As has been said before, Abū Ḥāmid in this book follows closely al-Subkī's well-known older work (without crediting this source), yet also presents some original material

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[10] By Sultan al-Muʾayyad Shaykh (r. 815/1412–824/1421), cf. Ps.-Ībn Ẓahīra [= Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī], *al-Faḍāʾil al-bāhira fī maḥāsin Miṣr waʾl-Qāhira*, edd. Mustafa al-Saqqa and Kāmil al-Muhandis; Cairo 1969, 202–3 (*faḍila* no. 22).

[11] On Abu Hamid's life and scholarly achievement see primarily al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*, Cairo n.d., vii, 234–7 (biography no. 575).

[12] Ms Berlin 5618.

which deserves closer scrutiny. In our context Abū Ḥāmid's proud invocation of the social leadership of the *'ulamā'*, among whom he counts himself, is particularly noteworthy. The scholars are presented as epitomes of moral integrity and unique learnedness, as the "salt of Egypt". Their place is side by side with the Turkish lords of the country who are condescendingly dismissed as an evil that is necessary for the safety of the country and the *umma* at large. The Mamluks are pitifully depicted as uneducated barbarians and despicable slaves who basically owe all their might and success to the education they graciously received from the learned classes. In another place[13] I have labelled this condescending attitude of Arab scholars vis-à-vis their Turkish rulers or, in other words: the construction of the Mamluk barbarian, as "septentrionalism", thus insinuating some communality of this demeaning Mamluk discourse of late medieval Egyptian and Syrian *'ulamā'* with the image of the prototypical Oriental in Edward Said's model of orientalism

(b) Text number two, written in 871/1466–7, one year before Qāytbāy's accession to the throne, has been known to us at the latest[14] ever since the Cairo millenium of 1969 when it was published with its correct title *Al-Faḍā'il al-bāhira fī maḥāsin Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, "The striking merits and assets of Egypt and Cairo", yet was attributed to a mysterious Ibn Ẓahīra instead of our author Abū Ḥāmid.[15] This book in many aspects resembles the far better known contemporary work *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara* written by the polymath al-Suyūtī (d. 1505). *Al-Faḍā'il* presents itself as an encyclopaedia of Egypt's distinctive geographical and historical features and is full of interesting details and personal observations. It is in this work that Abū Ḥāmid claims the leadership of Egypt in the Islamic world. To him Mamluk Egypt is the center of power in his age, furthermore the heartland of pure, non-sectarian Islam (*baydat al-islām*), with Cairo as its brilliant capital.[16] It is the proper seat of the caliphate (*kursī al-imām*).[17] Egypt's lords derive their legitimacy from the de fence of the *dār al-*

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[13] "Joseph und seine Söhne", *Wissenschaftskolleg—Institute for Advanced Study—zu Berlin, Jahrbuch* 1995/6, ed. W. Lepenies, Berlin 1997, 65–71, here 69.

[14] The correct attribution of this text (in the Gotha ms # 1628) to Abū Ḥāmid was achieved, as early as 1903, by Else Reitemeyer, *Beschreibung Ägyptens im Mittelalter aus den geographischen Werken der Araber*, Leipzig 1903, 214.

[15] See Micheal Cook, "Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī'", 85–97, esp. 91.

[16] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 82.

[17] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 185.

islām against infidel and *rāfiḍī* foes and thus rightfully claim the true succession to the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.

In the final chapter of this work dealing with the twenty-nine special attractions and assets (*faḍā'il*) of Cairo we find interesting remarks on the architecture of the time, a field for which our author seems to have fostered a special liking and on which I shall therefore dwell for a moment. Right in the first place in this list we find mentioned the very size (*'iẓam*) of Cairo and the plethora of buildings in it.[18] No city on earth has more inhabitants (*a'mar*) than the Mamluk capital, he maintains. The convent of Sa'id al-Su'adā' alone with its seven hundred residents, a place which our author knew so well because he spent part of his life there, is presented as a town in itself. The sheer plentitude and the lavish equipment of the mosques and colleges of Cairo is summarized as fadila number two of Cairo.[19] Number three is, quite surprisingly at that early date, al-Azhar,[20] number four the assembly of exquisite baths in the city,[21] and number five the choice funerary structures of Cairo.[22] Hosting the burial sites of holy men and women such as al-Shāfi'ī, al-Sayyida Nafīsa or Dhū'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī within Cairo's precincts grants the city additional prestige and splendor. But also the extravagant secular palaces on the island of al-Rawda and in al-Fustat contribute to Cairo's unique status as the architectural capital of the world. It is from this source that we learn that Sultan al Mu'ayyad Shaykh (who ruled from 815/1422 bo 824/1421) began developping the area of Bulāq (later: Būlāq) on the receding banks of the Nile which ever since became a real town with markets, streets, alleys and baths attracting denizens from all social strata and geographical provenances.[23]

(c) The third text, written in 877/1473, is a brief history of the first five years of Qāytbāy's sultanate. We have two titles for this book: *al-Durra al-muḍī'a fī khabar al-dawla al-ashrafiya*, "The shining pearl: On the government of Sultan al-Ashraf" and *Ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Ashraf Qāytbāy*.[24] It has been known for some time as an anonymous work and has been consulted notably by David Ayalon because

[18] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 188–90.
[19] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 190.
[20] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 190.
[21] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 190–1.
[22] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 191.
[23] al-Qudsī, *al-Faḍā'il*, 202–3 (no. 22).
[24] I have used Ms British Library Or. 3028.

of its detailed and solid information on the financing of Qāytbāy Syrian campaigns against the Dulghadir rebel Shāh Suwār in the years before 1473.[25] The officers who participated in these *tajārīd* are arranged in ranks and by name, a least in the higher echelons of the military hierarchy.

This text certainly deserves more attention than it has received in the past, not the least because it, too, contains rich architectural information in the section where Qāytbāy's laudable building activities in Egypt, Syria and Arabia in the first half decade of his sultanate are meticulously enumerated.[26] The book falls into two parts, one dealing with the vita of the ruling sultan and not unexpectedly combining stereotyped encomium with down-to-earth data, the other sketching the history of Muslim Egypt from Saladin to Qāytbāy. This latter part is highly informative when the modalities of succession, a key subject of Mamluk historical studies, are discussed. So Abū Ḥāmid grants special attention to the fact that Sultan Jaqmaq in 857/1453 reliquished the throne in favor of his son, a step which was later to be repeated by Sultan Qāytbāy himself. Abū Ḥāmid informs us in this text on the otherwise undocumented institution of the *amīr al-niẓām* or, respectively, *niẓām mamlakat waladihi*, i.e. of the guardian of the heir-apparent.[27] We all know that in the fifteenth century again and again the sons of deceased sultans followed their fathers on the throne, only to find themselves lamentably evicted from the sultanate once the mighty generals of the time had agreed upon one from among their own ranks as the new sultan. This text is furthermore of historical relevance because it contains descriptions of Barsbāy's successful and Jaqmaq's far less propitious maritime expeditions against the Christian islands of Cyprus and Rhodes in the years 828/1425 and 847/1443 respectively.

(d) Text number four of 880/1476 is indubitably the most striking product of Abū Ḥāmid's pen. It is unique for its petulance, its

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[25] Ayalon, "The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society", *JESHO*, 1, (1958), 37–65, 257–956, here 2924; this work, written by a still "anonymous" writer is also consulted by Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? the Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power*, (Albany, 1994), 8, 254, and idem: *Twilight of Majesty. The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qaytbay and Qansuh al-Ghawri in Egypt*, (Seattle and London 1993), 12 and 239.

[26] U. Haarmann, "Eine neue Quelle zur Bautätigkeit Sultan Qayitbays im ersten Jahrfünft seiner Herrschaft", *Gedenkschrift fur Michael Meinceke*, ed. by A. Barrucand and M. Freiberger, to appear in *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 1998.

[27] Cf., e.g., fol. 77b, line 2, and 80b, line 9.

sloppy language, style and composition, its wanton exaggerations, but also for its striking vigour, its profound authenticity and, most significantly, for its thesis, the unorthodox defence of the Mamluks and for the praise of their achievements on behalf of Egypt and Islam—i.e. a most outlandish pro-Mamluk text that must have been shocking to the contemporary readers and scholars. All of a sudden they, the Turko-Circassian soldiery, are portrayed as the salt of Egypt. They, the Mamluks, are indispensable as Holy Warriors, as guarantors of security and, *horribile dictu*, even as equal partners in the production of knowledge and culture. They severely mete out justice against all transgressors. They are the only ones in the country to curb chaos and insubordination. The *'ulamā'*, on the other hand, are quite rightly favourite victims of Mamluk jurisdiction. For the learned class are vain cowards, who shun any responsibility and still demand all benefits for themselves. Without any restraint Abū Ḥāmid paints them as miserable and phony egotists, who are unable to take care of their own welfare.

The never ending title of this treatise, which was published recently[28] speaks for itself: *Duwal al-islām al-sharīfa al-bāhiya wa-dhikr mā zahara lī min ḥikam Allāh al-khafiya fī jalb ṭā'ifat al-atrāk ilā'l-diyār al-miṣriya*, "On the noble and radiant Islamic dynasties, as well as on God's hidden wisdom—as I became aware (please notice the unusual first person!)—in leading the nation of the Turks to Egypt". Abū Ḥāmid tells us that he was imbued with the idea of writing this strange work in a dream.[29] The book was dedicated to Yashbak al-Ẓāhirī, Qāytbāy's mighty *dawādār kabīr* whose patronage was famous; Yashbak, otherwise a most cruel and crafty military man who ignominiously died a victim of his own ambitions at the hand of an Aqqoyunlu general, did much to further the efflorescence of historical studies in the period. The lavish copy of al-Ṣafadī's huge fourteenth century biographical dictionary which served as the basis for the critical edition now gradually coming to an end, was commissioned by Yashbak himself.[30]

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[28] Ed. Subhi Labib and Ulrich Haarmann in *Bibliotheca Islamica* vol. 37, Beirut and Berlin 1997.

[29] *Duwal*, 2.

[30] This event, as seen by the Iranian contemporary historian Faẓlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī, is analyzed in U. Haarmann, "Yeomanly Arrogance and Righteous Rule: Faẓl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī and the Mamluks of Egypt", in: K. Eslami, ed., *Iran and Iranian Studies. Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, Princeton 1998, 107–24, here 116–9.

Like Abū Ḥāmid's history of Qāytbāy also *Duwal al-islām* falls into two distinct parts with distinct principles of composition. The first section of *Duwal al-islām* contains the history of Muslim Egypt from the beginnings under the Caliph ʿUmar I to Sultan Qāytbāy. Here Abū Ḥāmid is first indebted to al-Dhahabī (from whom he borrowed the first element of his title, i.e. *Duwal al-islām*), then to his revered teacher al-Maqrīzī, whose famous chronicle *al-Sulūk* for long passages serves as a guideline, and finally, for the period after al-Maqrīzī's death in 1442, to Ibn Taghrī Birdī with his history *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*.[31]

It makes fun to compare Abū Ḥāmid's rendering of events in part one of his work with the texts he relied upon, notably al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk*. Abū Ḥāmid feels totally unrestrained in manipulating his guiding texts when he gives a precis of the history of these nine centuries. Whenever he feels like it he dwells on an anecdote or episode, then, as if he wanted to compensate lost ground, he skips over equally pertinent material. An example for Abū Ḥāmid's random technique of selecting and dismissing events is the extensive coverage of the career of Sultan Barqūq, the founder of the Circassian dynasty and thus certainly an important figure in the more recent past of our author, and the ensuing total negligence of the troublesome, no less momentous sultanate of Barqūq's son Faraj.[32]

With fantasy and improvisation, in brief: with the unrestrained freedom of a composer, he compiles his text. A textual logic cannot be identified in his procedure—beyond his obvious urge to captivate his readers' attention and not to waste too much time on this introduction. Definitely the balanced rendering of "what had happened" was not his prime objective here. He plays with the facts, words and statistics he found in his model texts. Al-Maqrīzī's correct Arabic is elegantly transformed into colloquial Arabic. When a Syrian governor of the late Qalawunid period (who possibly spoke Turkish anyway) refused to obey the summon of his ruler with al-Maqrīzī's words *lā atawajja-hu li-dhālika illā wa-maʿī mamālīkī* ("I will go there only in the company of my Mamluks"), Abū Ḥāmid—who otherwise copies his teacher in this passage—makes the general say the same curtly and less pompously: *arūḥ bi-sharṭ an yakūn mamālīkī maʿī*.[33] Figures

[31] See the German introduction to *Duwal*, 51–3.
[32] al-Qudsī, *Duwal*, 91–3.
[33] al-Qudsī, *Duwal*, 75; cf. Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk* ed.

seem to have served the distinct purpose of being exaggerated. So when al-Maqrīzī in the year 749/1348 names three hundred victims of the first assault of the Black Death on Cairo, Abū Ḥāmid who relies on the text of his teacher also in this instance, quickly multiplies them by 67 and speaks of 20.000.[34] Such a number makes better reading. Even more problematic is the lengthy story appended to *Duwal al-islām* in which a former teacher of Mamluks (*faqīh al-asyād*) decries the gradual deterioration of the old and rigid Mamluk customs and reminds us of the good old days when the young cadets spent four times five, i.e. incredible twenty years, on the Cairo citadel before they were allowed to move to the city.[35] Here we have no alternative text to pin down Abū Ḥāmid's fabrication or, respectively, creative imagination. I also have my serious doubts about Abū Ḥāmid's claim[36] that al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, during his third reign from 1310 to 1341, bought an unimaginable number of 100,000 Mamluks.

In the crucial second part of this work however, where Abū Ḥāmid counts and classifies the various blessings accruing both to the Turks from being privileged to live in Egypt and to the Egyptians from having the Mamluks as overlords, he regains solid ground. He no longer needs any models. He now can fully indulge in expounding his message, the castigation of his peers and colleagues, the corrupt and gullible fellow *'ulamā'* This part two of *Duwal al-islām* is original from the first to the last line. Taken together, both sections, each in its way, present our author as a unique personality with a very idiosyncratic approach to recording past and recent events.

(e) In his fifth book, written two years later, in 882/1477–8, Abū Ḥāmid presents himself with less sentiment and in a less unbalanced mood. This treatise takes up some of the themes of his earlier writing. Like *Duwal al-islām* also this relatively short tract was dedicated to the general Yashbak. Also here both the legitimate claims of the Mamluk elite and questions of architecture are tackled. The cumbersome title of the book reads, in triple rhymed prose: *al-Fawā'id al-nafīsa al-bāhira fī bayān ḥukm shawāriʿ al-Qāhira fī madhāhib al-a'imma*

Muhammad Mustafa Ziyada and Sa'id 'Abd al-Fattah 'Ashur, i–iv, (Cairo 1934–73), here iii, 213.

[34] al-Qudsī, *Duwal*, 66; cf. al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, ii, 780–6.

[35] al-Qudsī, *Duwal*, 128–31.

[36] al-Qudsī, *Duwal*, 61.

al-arbaʿa al-zāhira, "Most valuable knowledge on the legal status of the streets of Cairo according to the teachings of the four schools".[37] Yashbak had ordered the cleansing of the roads of Cairo, notably the famous Fatimid main street "Bayn al-Qasrayn", from all kinds of post festum additions to existing buildings, such as vending benches, booths, and stalls, as well as other encroachments that impaired the free movement of the Muslims (*ṭarīq al-muslimīn*) in the city. Yashbak's measures obviously met strong opposition from those affected by these actions, not the least because some of these demolitions concerned *waqf* property. Taking recourse to authoritative writings of the four Sunni legal schools Abū Ḥāmid steps to Yashbak's side and provides him with—so I am both sure and afraid—unsolicited and unappreciated legal counsel.

(f) and (g) Less than three years later Yashbak was to fall victim to his own ambitions, when he foolhardily invaded Turcoman territory and was captured and executed by one of Yaʿqūb Aq Qoyunlu's vassals. This event finally leads us, if this attribution is correct, to Abū Ḥāmid's sixth and possibly also his seventh text, of which we know, so far, little more than their respective titles and the places where they are kept, namely Istanbul and Cairo. They were composed in 885/1480, perhaps in order to comfort the desolate Sultan Qāytbāy over the untimely demise of his impetuous general Yashbak.[38] Brockelmann[39] records their titles: *Bushrā bi-ḥuṣul al-ajr al-matīn wa'l-naṣr al-mubīn fī tasliyat al-ḥazīn*, "Good tidings about the arrival of the solid recompense and the clear triumph: Solace for the bereft" and *Al-Ǧawāb al-murhaf ʿan su'āl al-Malik al-Ashraf*; "The pointed answer to Qāytbāy's question". It is highly desirable to gain more precise information on these two texts so that they can be properly situated

[37] Ed. by Amal al-ʿUmari, Cairo 1988. See also the references to this work in D. Behrens-Abouseif: "Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Ashraf Qāytbāy—patrons of urbanism", in: U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet, eds., *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimi'd, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, (Leuven 1995–, 267–84, here 275 and note 29; "Patterns of urban patronage in Cairo: A comparison between the Mamluks and Ottoman periods", in: Th. Philipp and U. Haarmann, eds., *The Mamluks in Egyptian politics and society*, (Cambridge 1998–), 224–34, here 228, note 13.

[38] On Qāytbāy's despair after Yashbak's death see Petry, *Twilight*, 87; B. Martel-Thoumian, "Les dernières batailles du grand émir Yašbak min Mahdī", in: Yaacov Lev, ed.: *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th–15th Centuries*, (Leiden 1997), 301–42, especially 328–30.

[39] *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, ii, (Leiden 1949), 77–8 [93].

in the vagaries of Abū Ḥāmid's career as a historian. And it may well be that yet more titles attributed to Abū Ḥāmid will turn up.

Who is the salt of Egypt?

If we want to do justice to Abū Ḥāmid's historiographical achievement we have to look closer at his vita once more. At a certain moment and under the impact of certain events the author daringly trespassed the bounds of the established historical discourse of his time and became an eccentric in the true sense of the word. These bounds were so profoundly internalized by the members of the intellectual élite of the time that the impact required to break this cage must have been enormous. From now on Abū Ḥāmid, having shed the fetters of convention, employed new formal devices, i.e. a new language and a new style, and assumed a very precarious attitude towards historical truth, consistency of chronology, verifiable dates etc. With this new stance he not only violated our modern standards of historical work but also the rules laid out as mandatory for traditionists and historians in medieval Islam; one may only want to mention the catalogue of requirements for proper historical research assembled by al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363) in the preface to his biographical dictionary *Al-Wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*.[40]

But how did all this happen? How could the Mamluks succeed the *'ulamā'*, after all the social group to which Abū Ḥāmid himself belonged, as the "salt of Egypt" in Abū Ḥāmid's personal value system? Fortunately an answer can be given to this question. His change of loyalties and the trespassing of the boundaries of his own social microcosm was anything but a voluntary act. It was not the result of a sober view from the outside, as we can find in the writings of contemporary European travellers, which could do justice not only to Mamluk martial prowess, rapaciousness and inclemency, but also to the Mamluk spirit of sacrifice, their social responsibilities, artistic interests and intellectual capabilities. Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (ruled from 1501–16), e.g., who is ever and ever again portrayed as exceptionally cruel, was at the same time a patron of letters and arts and personally engaged in scholarly debates on legal, religious and

[40] Ed. Hellmut Ritter, second edition, (Wiesbaden 1381/1962), 2–55, especially 46–7.

historical issues in regular sessions which he held on the Cairo citadel if we may believe contemporary reports.[41] His poetry is preserved both in Arabic and in Turkish. He is said to have spoken as many as seven languages.

In order to gain the inner aloofness to see the foreign élite rather than one's own group as the yeast in contemporary society, Abū Ḥāmid had to go through a traumatizing experience which takes us back to his biography. He was a strange individual. Abū Ḥāmid profoundly irritated his colleagues with his mental slowness, his high-spirited naivete, but also with his penchant towards exploiting the work of others without giving due credit. We have heard of his unscrupulous copying of al-Subkī's *Muʿīd*. The famous contemporary historian and biographer al-Sakhāwī (d. 901/1497) who survived Abū Ḥāmid for fourteen years does not restrain himself in his obituary of our author. "He was not able to cope with his tasks, because he was not really versed in his field. After all he had all kind of strange ideas in his mind and tended to omit words and whole biographies [in his compilations]",[42] al-Sakhāwī brusquely accounts for Abū Ḥāmid's professional failure. He was good-humored, to be true, but how difficult was it to communicate with him because of his profound dullness. And "his poetry was all in consistency with his other writings", al-Sakhāwī not very affably completed his devastating verdict. The Maliki supreme judge al-Quhūqī al-Laqqānī (d. 896/1490) also did not hesitate to express openly his contempt for our author.[43] Abū Ḥāmid did not grasp the destructive group dynamics in which he was caught. Ibn Iyās (d. 1524) who labelled Abū Ḥāmid downright stupid (*balīd al-dhihn qalīl al-fahm*),[44] quotes envenomed verses coined at Abū Ḥāmid: "Abū Ḥāmid, your fame spreads far afield for all your works and achievements in disciplines in which nobody equals you—your scholarship is unique, nobody in these domains

[41] *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī. Ṣafaḥāt min taʾrīkh Miṣr fīʾl-qarn al-ʿāshir al-hijrī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhab ʿIzzat, Cairo 1360/1941; on this peculiar source see now the pertinent remarks by Jonathan Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims: the military élite and the construction of Islam in medieval Egypt", in: Thomas Philipp and Ulrich) Haarmann, eds., *The Mamluks in Egyptian politics and society*, (Cambridge 1998, 163–73, here 170–3.

[42] al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'* vii, 236.

[43] al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'* i, 163, line 3.

[44] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, ed. Mohamed Mostafa, iii, Cairo 1383/1963 (= vol. 5c of Biblioheca Islamica), 200, line 3.

gets close to you".[45] When the naive Abū Ḥāmid, so Ibn Iyās informs us, heard these laudatory lines, he was full of bliss; "not noticing that one had pulled his leg in these two verses".[46] So when Abū Ḥāmid in all his naiveté then even proudly spread this poetry around, he dragged himself ever more deeply into the catastrophe. Fits of depression and a total collapse of self confidence were the logical result when he finally realized the sinister game his supercilious fellow *'ulamā'* had been playing with him all the time.[47] His worst experience was the discovery that even his admired teacher of old days, al-Shihāb b. Raslān, a man whose judgment enjoyed greatest general respect in his time,[48] had also ridiculed him behind his back.[49] The moral destruction by his colleagues—for whose "love and respect" (*al-maḥabba wa'l-qabūl*)[50] he had fought so indefatigably—quite understandably ignited in him the powerful fury and hatred against his own group that enabled him, in the end, to step out of his cognitive prison and to see, with new eyes, the limitations germane to the tribe to which he himself had belonged for so long and whose rules he, too, had guarded so jealously. Thus in 1476 or or briefly before he decided to write his book, or should I say: pamphlet?, *Duwal al-islām.*

Sad as this turn of events was for the *man* Abū Ḥāmid, it is helpful for us historians today. Exactly because Abū Ḥāmid in at least this one work dissociates himself forcibly from the rules of his time and of his profession, he presents us with insights which he himself would not have had without his preceding eviction from the paradise of a humble yet happy scholar's life and his ensuing abandonment of the conventions of contemporary chroniclers.

In Abū Ḥāmid's epistle on the Turks the facts proffered are clearly tinged and, if deemed helpful for the story, distorted. Here "narrativity" in lieu of "sobriety" is obvious. As I have said before nobody would ever qualify part one of *Duwal al-islām* as an unimpeachable historical source. In this work a deep chasm separates Abū Ḥāmid from his teacher al-Maqrīzī whom both his contemporaries and

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[45] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 200, lines 8–9.
[46] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 200, lines 5–6.
[47] al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'* vii, 234, lines 19ff.
[48] al-Maqrīzī maintains that he had never known anybody else of his standing; cf. al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, i, 287, line 4 from bottom.
[49] al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, vii, 237, line 13.
[50] al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, vii, 237, line 11.

modern research rank so much higher because he, al-Maqrīzī, unlike his disciple Abū Ḥāmid, complies in such an examplary fashion with the given rules of the craft. On the other hand we see, in part two of this treatise, Abū Ḥāmid the iconoclast. He tells us evident "truths" about Mamluk intelligence and craftsmanship in scholarly and artistic realms which hardly any other member of the civilian élite would have articulated so clearly. We have discussed the reasons for this unusual stance.

We now have to measure against each other, one, Abū Ḥāmid's professional and formal insufficiencies in which he indulged evidently without the faintest trace of a bad conscience, and, two, his unique contribution to history. I think, the latter has more weight than the former. Abū Ḥāmid first abandoned and then, from the outside, pinned down the self-view and social discourse of contemporary native scholars on whose information we depend so lamentably. And this specific discourse entailed the construction of an uncouth, uncultured and barbarian Mamluk ruling class because it served as a foil for the self-aggrandizement of one's own group. And this class was, in my assumption, not at all truly longer so sure of its unique status in society. Breaking this taboo Abū Ḥāmid allows us to take a look behind the scenes. For us historians he thus becomes an exceptionally valuable inside informant. In his aloofness he joins all those strangers, whether Muslims, Jews or Christians, one only may want to name Ibn Khaldūn, who came to Egypt from the outside and for whom it was therefore so much easier to give their proper, detached, observations of the country and its social set-up.

One final remark. The majority Mamluk discourse of late medieval chroniclers, which denies any relevant Mamluk contribution to contemporary civilization, stubbornly persists to this day. An alternative view on the distribution of merits between the military and the local learned élite, as proffered by Abū Ḥāmid or, for that matter, the wise Ibn Khaldūn, was apparently never given a chance to assert itself in all the centuries after the demise of the sultanate. True, in the case of Abū Ḥāmid's *Duwal al-islām* (part II) the argument remains on the table that his view and presentation of Mamluk realities was tinged or even geared by his desperate twofold desire of gathering attention (and remuneration) from the Mamluks, the objects of his profuse praise, and of ostracizing his *'ulamā'* peers who had inflicted so much personal harm upon him. But even if he should have been such a miserable sycophant, his message is therefore not necessarily

invalidated and spurious. It rather provides a most welcome dissenting opinion whose salience can be seen from out side, outsider, sources such as Ibn Khaldūn's work or the *Majālis al-Ghawrī* commissioned in Mamluk quarters.

In a review of Abū Ḥāmid's *Duwal al-islām*, Nicola Ziyada, dean of the Lebanon's respected school of historians, dismisses the whole text as fiction. He chides Abū Ḥāmid as a venal opportunist who profusely distorted the truth according to his whims and only wrote in a type of prose encomium what the authorities of the time wished to be told. "This is not a work of history" (*laysa huwa kitāb ta'rīkh*), he curtly dismisses the key message of the book.[51] Reality is turned upside down in this work, he maintains—thus denying any plausibility whatsoever to Abū Ḥāmid's unconventionally positive rendering of Mamluk sway and social order. The view of the Mamluks as alien, barbarian, as well as uncivilized outsiders subjugating the cultured native élites of Arab Egypt and Syria seems to be hard to eliminate, even to our days, when inner detachment from events half a millenium ago should rather be the rule than the exception. It will be worth monitoring the further development of the image of the Mamluks in Arab historiography.

[51] "La-ṭālama qalaba ahl al-qalam al-tārīkh irḍā'an li-awliya'ihim", *al-Hayat* (Beirut), 28 July 1998, 17, col. 5.

DISRUPTIVE 'OTHERS' AS DEPICTED IN CHRONICLES OF THE LATE MAMLŪK PERIOD

Carl F. Petry

From publication of *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld* by C.E. Bosworth in 1976,[1] the shady side of pre-modern Islamic cultures has intrigued historians who seek to recapture the realities of life for those outside the civil or military elites. While a variety of sources dwell on individuals or groups who inhabited the margins of medieval Muslim societies, many literary works idealize them as engaging rogues who adroitly defied efforts of oppressive authorities to curb their behavior.[2] These sources aimed at picaresque entertainment, which simultaneously spoofed the incompetence of those in positions of power. They tended to shy away from the darker aspects of life for disruptive 'others' whose existence was precarious at best, and fraught with the risks of reprisals by the authorities they flaunted. A more realistic impression of crime and disruption in other medieval societies has been sought by perusing archival registers of persons jailed for their behavior. But prior to the Ottoman period, such registers have not survived in the Middle East. The narrative chronicles from the Middle Ages do, however, yield references to the activities of these disruptive others. And despite biases that stem from their authors' identity with the ruling classes, these works tended neither to idealize nor demonize the behavior of urban criminals or rural bandits.

Given their profuse details on many subjects, chronicles from the late Mamlūk period shed light on two distinct kinds of disruption in Egypt: Bedouin pillaging of rural districts, and incidents of crime in Cairo. Other manifestations of disruption figured prominently in these

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[1] Secondary title: *The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1976).

[2] For the several editions of the *Alf Layla wa-Layla*, consult Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London, 1994), 1–8. On research into another less prominent, but equally engaging, example of popular literature, see Boaz Shoshan, "Comedy, Pornography and Social Critique in the Romance of Aḥmad Danif," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27 (1996), 216–26.

works, in particular by individuals the judicial and religious authorities castigated as deviates from accepted canons of belief. But this latter element represented a special category of disruption separate from either banditry or non-doctrinal crime. The ruling regime exercised restraint before intruding into theological controversies, prudently avoiding opportunities for rabble rousers to attract a wider audience for their inflammatory statements.[3]

Beyond their intrinsic interest, the exploits of Bedouin bandits or incidents of urban crime as reported in the chronicles are significant because their authors linked them to the Mamlūk regime's incapacity to assure public safety. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries C.E., the Cairo Sultanate had to coexist with almost ubiquitous Bedouin pillaging in the Delta and Nile Valley. As discussed below, Bedouin tribes had become an intractable aspect of rural society in Egypt. On occasion, they ventured into the capital itself. The Mamlūk regime could not prevent their predation, and in fact entered into collusion with them if mutual profit could be discerned. Yet the chroniclers chose to interpret the Bedouin primarily as despoilers who harassed peasant cultivators and seized crops or rents intended for the regime's use. By highlighting Bedouin pillaging, they critiqued the regime's difficulties in safeguarding its vital agrarian foundation.

Criminal acts in Cairo, as they appeared in these narrative sources, pose complexities that were less noticeable in Bedouin pillaging. Although market looting and mob violence on the part of civilians figured prominently, they did not exceed the almost incessant rioting by Mamlūk recruits or veterans throughout the Sultanate's final decades. Narrative writers focused their condemnations primarily on these latter groups, since they were formally bound to uphold the public security they so blatantly violated in fact. Looting and mob actions by civilians, on the other hand, were at once decried and glossed over as disturbing manifestations of that murky underworld which sporadically erupted into public view. And crimes by individuals were regarded as examples of moral lapse which punishment could check but not ameliorate. This study will analyze civilian criminal activity by categorizing its more salient examples—those

[3] I have touched on this situation in "Scholastic Stasis in Medieval Islam Reconsidered: Mamluk Patronage in Cairo," *Poetics Today* 14 (1993), 323–48. Th. Emil Homerin delves more deeply in his *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fārid, His Verse and his Shrine* (Columbia, 1994).

perceived by narrative authors as the most menacing to either public safety or public morality.

The study aims at exploring a second objective: discernment of collusion with Bedouin bands or urban gangs, either on the regime's part or by senior officers who, despite their prominence in government, may have compromised their official duties to enhance their fortunes or aggrandize their personal power. Did the narrative authors pursue an agenda of covert criticism by disclosing examples of collusion with the disruptive elements its most senior representatives were pledged to curb? Since one of these authors disputed an eminent predecessor's claims, their contrasting assertions indicate divided opinions by contemporary observers over the regime's commitment to public security. Analysis of the regime's objectives juxtaposed against its collusion is sharpened by recent research into broadly similar processes at work elsewhere. In particular, studies of banditry in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century by Karen Barkey,[4] or Bedouin autonomy in the Nile Valley by Jean-Claude Garcin[5] address analogous tensions between formal guardianship and clandestine collusion. How relationships between the late Mamlūk regime and Bedouin tribes or urban gangs compared with responses by the Ottoman Sultanate to banditry in Anatolia will be considered in the study's conclusion.

This analysis is based on reports of Bedouin pillaging or urban crimes in four chronicles: *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa'l-Shuhūr* by Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī (813–74/1411–69),[6] *Inbāʾ al-Haṣr bi-Abnāʾ al-ʿAṣr* by Ibn al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (819–ca. 900/1416–95),[7] *Al-Rawḍ al-Bāsim fī Ḥawādith al-ʿUmr wa'l-Tarājim* by ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ b. Khalīl al-Malaṭī (844–920/1440–1514),[8] and *Badāʾiʿ al-Ẓuhūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Duhūr* by Ibn Iyās (852–930/1448–1524).[9] Having examined the contents of these four works during the reigns of Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (872–901/1468–96) and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (906–22/

[4] *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, 1994).

[5] J.-C. Garcin, "Notes sur les rapports entre bédouins et fallahs à l'époque mamluke," *Annales Islamologiques* 14 (1978), 147–63.

[6] Ed. W. Popper, vol. 7, nos. 1–4 of *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* (Berkeley, 1930–31).

[7] Edited by Ḥasan Ḥanafī (Cairo, 1970).

[8] Ms.: Vatican Arabo, 729.

[9] Edited by M. Mustafa, H. Roemer, H. Ritter, vols. 3–5 (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1960–63).

1501–16), I am in possession of their references to Bedouin and criminal activities for these periods. The four chronicles constitute the primary narrative sources in Arabic for events within Egypt at this time.

The Bedouin Presence

Bedouin tribes played a pivotal role in the conquest of Egypt under ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ.[10] The occupying generations either assimilated into Egypt's settled population or moved on to exploits further West. Other Bedouin tribes penetrated the Nile Valley throughout subsequent centuries, either surreptitiously or at the behest of ruling regimes. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were a permanent presence that was not restricted to fringe zones. Although they retained the mobility that rendered them such formidable fighters, these Bedouin had become semi-sedentarized inhabitants of agrarian districts throughout the Delta and upper valley. Chroniclers of this period described them primarily as predators. Their comments parallel depictions of bandit gangs active in Anatolia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Egyptian narrative authors paid little attention to the Bedouin's more positive relations with peasants. Brushing over their provision of local security, these writers rarely commented about the process of sedentarization itself, which developed out of gradual assimilation with the local inhabitants. The chroniclers also remained silent about the Bedouin's life in Egypt's desert margins. The persistence of lineage identities implies the viability of tribal structures that flourish in a nomadic environment. But possessing little understanding of, or interest in, this mode of existence, the writers ignored it beyond noting the Bedouin's vexing evasive tactic of retreating into the desert to escape pursuit by detachments incapable of functioning in such a setting.[11]

Chroniclers had much to say about Bedouin pillaging. During the reigns of Qāytbāy or al-Ghawrī, Bedouin bands fought rival tribes in internecine conflicts, harassed caravans to and from Cairo, held envoys hostage and on occasion were brazen enough to attack

[10] H. Kennedy, "Egypt as a province in the Islamic Caliphate, 641–868," *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, i, (Cambridge, 1998), 62–85.

[11] As per note five.

Mamlūks garrisoned in the Delta and upper valley. Masters of ambush and stealth, these Bedouin bands succeeded as frequently as they met defeat, and managed to score embarrassing triumphs over their opponents. Senior officers whose reputations for pugnacity inspired widespread fear in Cairo lost their lives in these confrontations, their deaths vividly confirming the menace lurking just beyond the capital's boundaries.[12] Bedouin pillaging indeed occurred disturbingly close to the seat of Mamlūk power. References to raiding indicated the Delta provinces of Sharqiyya, Buḥayra and even Qalyābiyya as prime targets of Bedouin spoliation. By contrast, Upper Egypt figured less prominently in the chroniclers' reports of raids.[13]

The historian Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī, himself the son of a Mamlūk amir, commented at length on circumstances behind the intensification of Bedouin raiding that marred the years after Qāytbāy's accession. Ibn Taghrī Birdī did not hold Qāytbāy, or his colleague Yashbak min Mahdī, in the high esteem they enjoyed at the pens of other contemporary writers. Ibn Taghrī Birdī appended an explanation to his report of a rebellion by Bedouins resident in Buḥayra during Dhū'l-Qaʿda of 872/June 1468 for the sudden rejection of Mamlūk suzerainty throughout the Delta.[14] A senior amir, Lājīn, who had previously been sent to patrol Buḥayra, despatched an appeal to Cairo stating that he was under siege and required massive reinforcements to put down the rebellion. Ibn Taghrī Birdī commented on Qāytbāy's response, the scale of which indicated his sense of urgency. Seven muqaddamūn, all those remaining in Cairo, were sent at the head of two thousand Sulṭānī Mamlūks, a large expeditionary force. Ibn Taghrī Birdī then focused on the state of Bedouin unrest in the Delta: "Never have their ravages intensified as in these days. They have infested (the provinces of) Sharqiyya, Gharbiyya, Minūfiyya and Buḥayra. They (now) dwell in these districts and have appropriated their inhabitants' property. As for Buḥayra, they have confiscated the *iqṭāʿ*s. This situation stems from the regime's lack of

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[12] *Inbāʾ* 153, l. 8 (muqaddam ambushed in Buḥayra); *Badāʾiʿ*, iv, 81, l. 22 (pillaging in Sharqiyya, troops attacked).

[13] The sources reported thirty-one expeditions to the Delta, ten to Upper Egypt. These figures may suggest the regime's resignation to Bedouin dominance in the upper valley. J.-C. Garcin has dealt with this issue in "La 'méditerranéisation' de l'empire mamelouk sous les sultans baḥrides," *Revista degli studi orientali* 48 (1973–74), 109–16.

[14] *Ḥawādith*, vii: 631, l. 6.

solicitude for their affairs, and from the general instability of this particular year (872). The year has witnessed four sultans (in succession), as has been described. We provided a detailed account of their doings in our history, *Al-Nujūm al-Ẓāhira*. . . . The (rural) populace were not protected from the Bedouin after Yashbak min Mahdī, the Dawādār, summoned the Hazanbul Bedouin from Upper Egypt and settled them in Jīza Province. Upon their arrival, they plundered it severely. They then extended their ravages to Minūfiyya and elsewhere. Their pillaging spread to all the villages, and indeed they turned the hand of adversity against the countryside as their show of obedience since they were Bedouin of Yashbak's. . . . They had risen to prominence under his sanction during his administration as guardian (*kushūfiyya*) of Upper Egypt. None knew Yashbak's reasons for summoning them or releasing them close by him, given the Sultan's awareness of their arrival and heinous acts. (But) some were known to have said that the Sultan so dreaded the Ashrafī Īnālī Mamlūks whom he had advanced and appointed to high positions, that he ordered Yashbak to summon them (the Hazanbul) to check the conspiracies of the aforementioned Ashrafiyya against him. If any of them (the Ashrafiyya) committed misdeeds, these Hazanbul Bedouin would target them (for reprisals) with Yashbak's endorsement. . . . This was one of the most disgraceful acts committed by the Turks: seeking the Bedouins' aid against others of their kind. Some have recounted events differently, but this version is more accurate."

A year later, during Dhū'l-Ḥijja of 873/June-July 1469, Ibn Taghrī Birdī described Sultan Qāytbāy's first excursion of inspection through the Delta provinces.[15] Departing without fanfare after evening prayer, he was accompanied by only one muqaddam and a small troop escort. Having reconnoitered with Yashbak at a pre-arranged site that night, the two departed for Gharbiyya in the morning. Their itinerary included Buḥayra, Gharbiyya and Sharqiyya. Ibn Taghrī Birdī then denounced the Sultan's objectives: "Nothing (positive) resulted from his trip to these three provinces. Rather, the excursion devastated most of their villages. Marauding continued unconcealed and roads were openly blockaded. The Sultan's goal was to accept gifts, looting villages from one end of the region to the other

[15] *Ḥawādith*, vii: 710, l. 22.

with no benefit but widespread oppression. When the (Bedouin) bandits surmised his intentions, they heightened their (own) savagery, terrorized the highways and blockaded roads. Some dared to behave this way near the Sultan's own camp, robbing some of his retinue. This event severely discredited the state, for the populace despaired of any end to the Bedouins' depredations against them."

Ibn Taghrī Birdī's castigation of Qāytbāy's inaugural inspection tour did not go unchallenged. Al-Ṣayrafī who described the same episode more than a decade later, repudiated his predecessor's interpretation of the Sultan's agenda.[16] He quoted Ibn Taghrī Birdī almost verbatim and then offered his own defense of Qāytbāy's actions: "I state that al-Jamāl's account is off the mark, since the Sultan, may God nurture him, when he proceeded to a town or village by himself, compelled the bandits from that district or other (marauders) to depart. And when the inspector (*kāshif*) or the prefect (*wālī*) assaulted them on their own without the Sultan, they (the bandits) also fled. So indeed his excursion restored calm to the region and its populace."[17] The veracity of al-Ṣayrafī's version can be questioned because of his unqualified admiration for Qāytbāy. He dedicated his *Inbā' al-Haṣr* as a panegyric to the Sultans's leadership, which at the time of al-Ṣayrafī's writing, seemed an extraordinary success in light of previous reigns and the unsettled year 872. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, on the other hand, died soon after he set down his own views, and could not have foreseen either Qāytbāy's longevity or stable government.

In fact, neither version completely contradicts the other. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's linkage of Qāytbāy's readiness to tolerate Yashbak's Hazanbul clients to their potential blockage of the Īnāliya's conspiracies is plausible. Highly vulnerable to deposition during this period of consolidation, Qāytbāy relied on any effective means available to thwart their plots against him. He waited a year before venturing from Cairo on an inspection trip, and concealed the time of his departure. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's dismissal of this tour as an act of personal enrichment does not take stock of the Sultan's need to strike bargains with powerful Bedouin shaykhs whom he could not suppress outright, and on whose sufferance his own future might rest. Al-Ṣayrafī from hindsight, could downplay Qāytbāy's pragmatic tactics so early in his reign. Once he felt himself secure from the threat of

[16] *Inbā'* 71, l. 9.
[17] *Inbā'* 72, l. 14.

deposition by the Īnālīya, Qāytbāy confronted the Bedouin more firmly. It is also possible that the Sultan dealt with the situation in each district as he encountered it, collecting tribute (which Ibn Taghrī Birdī derided as confiscation) from some to placate the Bedouin, while driving them off from others. But the contrasting perspectives of each author on this controversial event are obvious. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, who died before Qāytbāy secured his office, remained a critic whereas al-Ṣayrafī, who lived to the end of the reign, regarded the formative period as a prelude to better days.

No question exists about the regime's alarm over the Bedouin menace during this period. As the gravest threat to order inside the realm, Bedouin raiding evoked a show of force exceeded in scope only by the expeditions sent against the Dhū'l-Qadrid rebel Shāh Suwār in southeastern Anatolia between 873–77/1468–73 or the Ottomans in the decade of the nineties. The chroniclers reported twice as many forays to quell raiding than actual incidents of it.[18] Paralleling the concentration of Bedouin pillaging in the Delta, most expeditions were despatched there. Thirty-one of forty-three references indicated districts within Lower Egypt. Expeditions to the upper valley posed more grueling conditions and required lengthier sojourns away from Cairo. In light of the near autonomy maintained by certain tribes in the Ṣaʿīd, the Sultanate may have focused its efforts on the Delta provinces, which provided a larger proportion of crops and *iqṭāʿ* rents than the valley.[19] Surrendering its sovereignty over the Delta would be tantamount to collapse while pragmatic resignation to suzerainty over the far southern districts of the valley could be endured.

It is significant that most references to forays in Upper Egypt occurred during the Ottoman wars.[20] The Bedouin were acutely sensitive to shifts in the Sultanate's relations with foreign powers and

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[18] Forty-three references to expeditions vs. twenty-one to reports of raids.

[19] See H. Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lehenregistern* I: Oberägypten und das Fayyum, II: Das Delta, for inventories of yields from *iqṭāʿ*s in the two regions. The Delta provinces contained far more *iqṭāʿ* units (*nāḥiya*) than the upper valley although yields from the latter were frequently larger. See my "Fractionalized Estates in a Centralized Regime: The Holdings of al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawri," *JESHO* 39, (1996), 1–21. For a statement on threats to *iqṭāʿ* holders, see *Badāʾiʿ*, iv, 51, l. 18.

[20] Few expeditions to Upper Egypt were reported before 881/1476. The majority occurred during the decade of the nineties when the regime was preoccupied with the Ottoman wars.

stood ready to seize the advantage of its distraction abroad. Ibn Iyās picked up on a rumor circulating in Cairo about alleged Bedouin plotting during the absence of so many military personnel.[21] "The Sultan learned of Bedouin discussions among themselves: 'If Egypt is no longer guarded by many soldiers, the time is ripe to overthrow the Turks.' Qāytbāy ordered soldiers remaining in Cairo out to Maṭariyya on reconnaissance every Sunday and Wednesday and to return with swords and quivers ready. They were to be mounted on horseback. The re-entered Cairo in patrols, the populace filling the shops to see them."

Despite elaborate preparations and formidable displays of martial power, expeditions did not routinely produce tangible results. In fact, their frequency implies the Sultanate's incapacity to suppress Bedouin raiding effectively. The Bedouin prudently retreated before overwhelming odds, but when clashes did occur the expeditionaries occasionally met with disaster. Ibn Iyās described the following encounter in Buḥayra during Ramaḍān of 891/October 1486. "The Sultan sent an expedition to Buḥayra to curb the marauding of Muḥammad al-Juwaylī, Shaykh of the Bedouin in that district. In command (*bāsh*) of the unit was Qurqmās al-Muʿallim, amir of ten. Other officers were: Asanbāy al-Mubashshir, Azbak Qafaṣ and Māmāy. Some two hundred Sulṭānī Mamlūks accompanied them. Upon arriving in Buḥayra, they engaged al-Juwaylī in violent combat with heavy casualties on both sides. The Egyptian force retreated without scoring a victory since al-Juwayli was not captured."[22] The Bedouins' mobility in hostile terrain also led to debacles. When the respected and normally sagacious Atābak Azbak min Ṭuṭukh pursued brigands from the Labīdh tribe into the desert West of Upper Egypt, his squadron suffered terribly from thirst as it chased their elusive opponents across arid wastes. A flask of water sold for one dinar (from whom was not mentioned).[23] Clearly the chroniclers depicted a stalemate ensuing from these prodigious efforts on the regime's part. Yet one individual stood out as a veritable "hammer against the Bedouin": the Dawādār Yashbak, Qāytbāy's right-hand man. But as previously noted, his methods prompted insinuations of connivance and open

[21] On Bedouin strategies during the Ottoman wars see *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 253, l. 3.
[22] *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 232, l. 12.
[23] *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 119, l. 2.

accusations of cruelty. How effective was his deterrence in the chroniclers' opinion? The record was mixed.

Yashbak was more experienced with Bedouin behavior than any other officer in Qāytbāy's inner circle. Having served as a *kāshif* or inspector in Upper Egypt before his colleague's enthronement, the Dawādār already possessed a reputation for ferocity in his suppression of raids. But he also was prepared to cut deals and exploit the pugnacity of certain tribes whom he made his clients when they served his ulterior interests. Qāytbāy relied on Yashbak to confront the most serious Bedouin rebellions during the first decade of his reign, preceding Yashbak's ill-fated attempt to carve out a principality for himself on the Euphrates frontier.[24] His tactics over these ten years amply demonstrated his capacity to meet Bedouin obstreperousness with remorseless brutality. Yet the chroniclers, and Ibn Taghrī Birdī in particular, perceived a certain caprice in his actions that bespoke an individual who held his own abilities in higher regard than his peers'—including those of his sovereign. And in the aftermath of Yashbak's departure, his Bedouin opponents remained ensconced in Upper Egypt. The suffering inflicted by their implacable enemy failed to eradicate them, or even to quell their pillaging.

Yashbak's familiarity with Bedouin tactics was evident in his response to a shaykh's attempt at inflating wheat prices in Cairo. ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī stated that Ibn ʿUmar, commander of the Huwāra tribe which dominated the Ṣaʿīd, was delaying the shipment of wheat and other crops to the port of Būlāq (Miṣr) to create a shortage.[25] Yashbak fixed the price of wheat at four hundred dirhams per irdabb, less than half the market rate, and forbade any increases until the crisis was resolved. Whether Yashbak also authorized the sale of wheat from his own stores at this reduced price al-Malaṭī did not relate. But he did note that wheat soon traded at its normal rate of nine hundred dirhams per *irdabb* following panic selling by grain speculators. Fearing a catastrophic decline in their own gains, the Huwāra almost certainly lifted their blockade and the supply returned to normal. Given the chroniclers' penchant for dwelling on the bellicosity of senior Mamlūk officers, references to adroit maneuvering

[24] On Yashbak's venture, see my *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawri in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993), 82–88.
[25] *Rawḍ*, f. 207, l. 2.

that precluded violence rarely appeared in their works. But this example of Yashbak's astuteness may have been more characteristic of his policies than his spectacular acts of repression which the chroniclers played up.

The latter were recounted in lurid detail. Perhaps the most famous involved Yashbak's deportation of four hundred women and children from the Halba tribe in Upper Egypt to Būlāq in Jumādā I 873/November-December 1468.[26] The notoriety of this affair was evident in its discussion by all four chroniclers. The Dawādār had returned from the Ṣaʿīd with these people as prisoners in the aftermath of an expedition to counter pillaging by bandits from this tribe. Upon his arrival, Yashbak confined the women and children to a *wakāla* in Būlāq and left them there to starve. While the local residents bore no fondness for the Bedouin, they were dismayed by such cruelty to non-combatants who were fellow Muslims. Groups assembled outside the *wakāla* walls to throw food and water flasks to those inside. The chroniclers, concurring with Ibn Taghrī Birdī who first reported the incident, condemned Yashbak's subjugation of hapless captives to a lingering death, since he did not relent regardless of protests. Also, they noted that his action provoked their men to even more devastating assaults. Halba gangs boarded grain barges and burned their cargos. The consequent disruption of shipments caused grain prices to rise steeply in Cairo. The chroniclers thus found Yashbak guilty of double indemnity: he inflicted unwarranted suffering on Muslims whose age and gender should have spared them, and his cruelty goaded the Halba to retaliate with worse predation.

The chroniclers frequently commented on Yashbak's personal vindictiveness. In 883/1478, two years before his departure, Yashbak finally captured one of his most elusive Bedouin foes: Yūnus b. ʿUmar al-Huwārī.[27] This man had forced the Dawādār into exhausting pursuit several times and was apprehended along with his brother Aḥmad only after a lengthy chase that ended in Nubia. Yashbak decapitated Yūnus and sent his head back to Cairo. Aḥmad was taken captive and brought to Cairo where he was gibbeted at the Bāb Zuwayla. Ibn Iyās remarked about grudging admiration by the populace for these two whose audacity was respected. The historian regarded

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[26] *Ḥawādith* vii, 695, l. 16; *Inbāʾ* 44, l. 16; *Rawḍ* f. 212, l. 8; *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 25, l. 19.
[27] *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 146, l. 10; 147, l. 15.

Aḥmad's execution as an act of vendetta on Yashbak's part, and claimed that many observers mourned his passing.

Yashbak's relationship with his sovereign companion, Qāytbāy, may have been strained on numerous occasions, but his irritation flared openly during the rebellion of Shāh Suwār. Qāytbāy initially passed over the Dawādār to place the Aṭabak Azbak in command of his first expeditions. Yashbak was sent to the Ṣaʿīd where he brooded over his stymied ambition. His frustration at being posted to a backwater erupted in Ṣafar 874/August-September 1469 when he sent an angry letter to Qāytbāy claiming that his squadron was undermanned and inadequately supplied while the Sultan squandered money on campaigns against Shāh Suwār that scored no victories.[28] The Dawādār admonished Qāytbāy to equip him properly so that he could finish with the Bedouin and then turn his attention to the Suwār affair. According to al-Ṣayrafī, Qāytbāy acceded to his adjutant's demands.

The chroniclers' therefore depicted Yashbak as a man of undisputed martial effectiveness who crushed his opponents. No figure in the ruling oligarchy was more feared among the Bedouin. But underlying this formidable image was their implication of a vainglorious person whose forcefulness was offset by self-serving collusion with those he was pledged to subdue. Yashbak's brutality was, in their opinion, recklessly blandished. At best, his efforts left the Bedouin situation unchanged.

If the "hammer of the Bedouin" could not appreciably quell Bedouin raiding, their predation probably could not be alleviated. But if the Bedouin were not eradicable, the fate of those whom the regime captured could serve as stark warnings to their comrades at large. The chroniclers dwelled on the grisly executions meted out to prominent Bedouin chiefs who were apprehended and returned to Cairo. I counted thirty-five instances of capture as reported by al-Ṣayrafī and Ibn Iyās. Of these, seventeen cases ended in jail sentences, eighteen in execution. The latter ranged from hanging to crucifixion (referred to as 'nailing'), decapitation, bisection (in which individuals were literally cut in two) and flaying alive. These last incidents were clearly designed to leave a vivid impression since the skins of both victims were stuffed for exhibition in Cairo.[29] The sec-

[28] *Inbā'* 131, l. 1.
[29] *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 229, l. 18; 324, l. 20.

ond case is worth quoting since it was shocking enough to unhinge the sultan. "Qānṣūh al-ʿĀdilī *kāshif* of al-Sharqiyya, arrived conveying a son of the Bedouin Shaykh Ibn Qurṭām named Ṣāliḥ, of the Banī Ḥarām. His skin had been flayed, cured and stuffed. It was placed (as a mannequin) on his horse and dressed with his silk mantle and cap on his head. He had been a handsome young man and the populace grieved for him. When his remains were presented to the Sultan (Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī), the latter was alarmed since he had not condoned the flaying. When this act became known, the Bedouin of the region rebelled and recaptured the Ḥalfāya dike, allowing the waters to flood surrounding areas when the river was approaching crest."

These executions made exciting theater which left a lasting impression the chroniclers picked up in their works. Yet such spectacles did little to relieve the Bedouin problem, and even their symbolic meaning seems indeterminate. What kind of message did these reprisals convey, if the chroniclers reported widespread empathy on the part of spectators? My own sense of these executions detects the readiness of the Mamlūk elite to inflict the ultimate in suffering on those who stepped over the line between tolerable disruption and behavior that personally humiliated powerful individuals within the ruling oligarchy. The record as conveyed by the chroniclers' comments does not indicate a grand design on the regime's part to eliminate the Bedouin. Rather, the Mamlūk oligarchy seems to have been resigned to their presence as an abiding irritant. In contrast with Karen Barkey's findings on the relationship between the Ottoman regime and Anatolian bandits,[30] the Mamlūk Sultanate did not openly coopt its most obstreperous Bedouin raiders. While the Sultanate bestowed honors on shaykhs who acknowledged its suzerainty and held their tribes within loose bonds of fealty, it formally maintained a stance of hostility toward brigandage. Senior officials inside the Mamlūk oligarchy, however, did collude covertly with persons or groups who were ready to focus their assaults on their patrons' rivals. This situation suggests a tension within the ruling establishment that profoundly affected its conduct. Since senior officers were always ready to compete for the Sultanate, they were never fully loyal to its incumbent. Their condemnation of Bedouin pillagers as criminals was

[30] Barkey, *Bandits*, 195–203.

qualified by pragmatic deal making with them if circumstances were mutually advantageous. Those Bedouin who met violent ends may have reneged on these clandestine bargains and failed to keep their raiding within mutually accepted limits. When they broke faith or crossed the line, they became traitors as well as criminals. Were such individuals truly 'others,' and seen as alien to the Mamlūk system? This question will be revisited in the conclusion.

Civilian Crime in Cairo

The following remarks address criminal acts committed by non-military elements. Crimes done by members of the Mamlūk caste were not considered since their behavior was determined by moral standards that differed from concepts of right or wrong as perceived by civilians who wielded no military power. Mamlūk trainees matured in a milieu that actively encouraged conspiracy as a normative form of competition. Their code of responsibility subordinated them to the wishes of their superiors but not to sensibilities of their civilian subjects. The chroniclers repeatedly condemned their riots as criminal. But unless their acts adversely affected a senior member of their caste, the legal authorities rarely held them to account.

The chroniclers described crimes committed by civilians either as isolated incidents by individuals or coordinated assaults involving groups who had plotted their deeds in advance. Although these crimes occurred often enough to be noticeable among events listed in the narrative sources, they cannot be interpreted as an accurate measure of civilian crime in general throughout Cairo. One must assume that crime was more widespread, its mundane cases passing without comment in the chronicles. Those incidents they mentioned were sufficiently conspicuous to have attracted public attention. It is therefore their notoriety that warranted their inclusion in the chronicles, all of which were compiled from daily logs of noteworthy events in the capital.

Yet given the likelihood that criminal acts appearing in these sources represented a kind of "notoriety index" of disruptive behavior, the proportions between categories do suggest public perceptions of relative seriousness. Some crimes, however unsettling or shocking, posed little danger to society at large since they affected only a few victims close to their perpetrators. Others were more threatening to

whole groups. Their occurrence menaced the routine functions of urban society, but raised few questions over lapsed morality. At the outset, I was surprised over the frequency of homicides: thirty-one cases compared with thirty-five incidents of theft committed by individuals or groups. Murder and thievery emerged as the most salient categories of crime reported in the chronicles. Because of my personal experience as a resident in modern-day Cairo, I had initially assumed that homicides would have occurred more rarely in premodern times. Of course, murder makes news and is unlikely to be considered mundane, while thievery could be regarded as routine and thus more apt to be ignored by chroniclers. Several other kinds of crime were represented, albeit less frequently. Their statistical insignificance should not obscure their intrinsic interest.

Before addressing these categories, their negative depiction in the narrative sources merits comment. In contrast with the image of street-wise pilferers or engaging philanderers so prominent in literary works such as *Alf Layla wa-Layla*, criminals were uniformly treated in the chronicles as wrongdoers. Their behavior was rarely described as admirable. The narrative authors did on occasion mention mitigating circumstances that may have impelled an individual or group to commit a crime. The wiles behind a cleverly planned heist could evoke acknowledgment of a deft stratagem. Yet however expert its execution, thievery menaced the security of property owners, and the narrative authors identified with those who held vulnerable assets in a society rife with poverty. Homicides might be justified but were not respected. Circumstances behind a murder could be understood and the chroniclers often mentioned the context of a homicide, their comments summarizing its public discussion and possible prosecution in the courts. But in no case of murder was its perpetrator considered morally sound in resolving his/her dilemma by taking a life. It is noteworthy that a literary work idealizing criminals such as *Alf Layla* did not dwell on homicides, except as a reprisal for adultery, primarily by its protagonists. Its tales involve pilferers, vagrants or adventurers rather than murderers.[31]

Of the thirty-one homicides, twelve (39%) involved either slaves or indentured persons who killed their masters or patrons. These cases highlighted tensions over personal subjugation and often revealed

[31] Irwin's chapter on "Low Life" in his *Arabian Nights* refers to murder only once, in the context of the Hunchback tales (p. 157).

sexual liaisons that had been discovered or whose disclosure was feared. The following examples illustrate these anxieties. Al-Ṣayrafī described an elaborate plot of murder and theft in Shaʿbān of 876/January-February 1472.[32] "A Mamlūk of al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq's corps resided in Cairo at a postern gate (*bāb sirr*) of the house of Amir Timur the Chamberlain (*Ḥājib*), an associate of Jānibak the Prefect (*wālī*). He (the Mamlūk) had supervised the arsenal early in al-Ashraf Īnāl's reign. He owned two female slaves, one white, one black, an elderly groom (*ghūlām shaykh*) and a black male slave. His assets amounted to some 2500 *dinar*s. They (the women and groom) plotted his murder and theft of his money. They apprehended the black slave, and goaded him to flight. They (the authorities) interrogated the groom about his master (*ustādh*). He replied: 'He departed two days ago bearing a dagger to pursue freebooting (*qarṣana*) and none know his whereabouts. He evaded his pursuers.' They (the authorities) then questioned him about the black slave but he pretended to know nothing. The Amir Timur al-Ḥājib summoned him and released him from his chains. He said to him: 'This soldier (the Mamlūk) has murdered many slave girls, slaves and freedmen. If he were killed, he would murder no one else.' He (the groom?) consequently produced the young (black) slave who confessed that his (the Mamlūk's) female slaves had strangled him, killed him and buried him in his stable. . . . The Amir Timur . . . then stood up and proceeded to his stable. They excavated it in his presence and found his (the slave's) statement to be true, for he (the Mamlūk) had been strangled. They seized those who aided his murder. . . . Accountants in the Privy Bureau (*Dīwān al-Khāṣṣ*) appropriated his assets. It was claimed that his female slaves and groom had divided up the money. The Amir (Timur) . . . requested his (the Mamlūk's) patrimony from the Sultan as a favor since he was the Mamlūk's neighbor and comrade (*khush[j]dāsh*). The groom and female slaves remained in custody, to be executed as they had killed." Al-Ṣayrafī noted their sentencing two months later.[33] Only the white female slave and the groom were convicted, with no comment on the two black slaves' fate. The Sultan ordered the condemned to be lashed and then hanged from the postern gate of their murdered master. The two were paraded in the streets on camels before their execution, and al-Ṣayrafī mused

[32] *Inbāʾ* 401, l. 10.
[33] *Inbāʾ* 425, l. 4; *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 70, l. 1 (likely abridged from al-Ṣayrafī).

that he had not previously witnessed a woman scourged and publicly displayed in this way.

Ibn Iyās described the execution of a Circassian slave woman in Shawwāl of 879/February-March 1475.[34] She was hanged for having (allegedly) seduced a Mamlūk recruit (*min al-julbān*) on the Ḥijāz road during the previous pilgrimage. When she became pregnant from the encounter, she exposed her infant, "fearing the Sultan's wrath." The Sultan ordered her hanged and had intended to terminate the recruit by drowning, "but he was said to have been pardoned and exiled to Syria." Qāytbāy regarded himself as a pious defender of morality who strictly enforced penalties for fornication. The slave woman's death by hanging for her indiscretion was predictable, but the recruit's reprieve revealed the gender gain enjoyed by men in adulterous affairs.

Ibn Iyās discussed a case of sexual infidelity by slaves and their partners late in Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign.[35] "On Saturday the ninth (of Jumādā II 921/21 July 1515), the Sultan ordered four persons hanged. They were: a white female slave of Anatolian (Rūmiyya) extraction, an Abyssinian (*Ḥabashiyya*) female slave, a youthful son of a notable (literally 'turbaned,' *min nās laffāf*) and a bow maker (*qawwās*). The reason: this son of a notable and the bow maker had fornicated with the two slaves and then urged them to assassinate their master, who was himself a Mamlūk's son (*walid al-nās*) and *iqṭāʿ* holder. They murdered him and cast his body into a latrine. They stole everything in his house and then departed for Aṭfīḥ. Five months elapsed before their crime was discovered. They were (then) denounced by a young female slave. A shaykh in Aṭfīḥ apprehended them and sent them back to the Sultan. Upon interrogation, they confessed to the murder and disposal of the body. The Sultan ordered the prefect (*wālī*) to investigate the case. He searched the latrine and found the body there in a putrid state. It was removed and shown to the Sultan. He ordered its burial, and the victim's *iqṭāʿ* reassigned to another Mamlūk. He then sentenced the perpetrators to be hanged. On the day of their execution, all Cairo turned out to witness it. They were conducted to the murder scene, near the Joy Gate (*Bāb al-Saʿāda*) and hanged." In two of these incidents, the victims belonged

[34] *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 104, l. 23.
[35] *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 461, l. 8.

to the Mamlūk elite. The slave who exposed her baby had intercourse with a Mamlūk recruit, and was accused of seducing him. In several other cases, the victims were prominent civilians, but one has the impression that these perpetrators were executed as much for rising against their masters and thus committing sedition against the ruling class as for the act of murder itself. The implication of sexual license also influenced the authorities in rendering their sentences. Social priorities in Mamlūk Cairo are suggested by the infrequency of theft as a motive linked to homicide: only five of the thirty-one cases.[36] The chroniclers noted several other instances of thievery punished by execution. But when they emphasized murder as the prime offence, theft did not outrank subjugation, infidelity or passion as causes. The lurking fear of individuals bound in servitude despatching their masters is apparent in the chroniclers' identification of slaves as the largest category of murderers.

Other circumstances for homicide included murder within families (three cases: two involving wives, one a father).[37] Three cases mentioned mutilation beyond inflicting a mortal wound.[38] An intriguing case involved the murder of prostitutes.[39] Its details merit quoting: "On Tuesday the twenty-ninth (of Jumādā II 876/11 December 1471), a strange event occurred in the quarter of Bahā' al-Dīn Qarāqūsh. Near the house of our shaykh, Ibn Ḥajar (al-ʿAsqalānī) stood a den of long-standing iniquity where resided a man from Ḥalab, a peculiar celibate. The den belonged to a person of Bedouin descent. The Ḥalabī enriched a woman among the daughters of sin and her mother. He paid the two a measure of silk and gold given him by an elderly panderer (*ʿajūz qawwāda*). The two wore outfits of silk embroidery, with gold bracelets and ruby or turquoise rings, gold hairnets and perfume (*misk*). He plied them abundantly with wine and indulged them in illicit behavior. He strangled them, seized what they had (gained) and fled, leaving them dead in the den. They

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[36] On theft as a motive: *Inbā'*, 247, l. 18; *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 126, l. 6; *Inbā'* 286, l. 18; 369, l. 16 (see note 38); 401, l. 10.

[37] On murders within families: *Inbā'* 215, l. 19 (wife mutilated); 515, l. 12; 516, l. 19; *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 198, l. 3 (sharīf accused of murdering wife; pays indemnity but refuses to confess); *Badā'iʿ*, iv, 160, l. 14 (young man denies accusation of murdering father).

[38] On mutilations, as per note 36; *Inbā'* 402, l. 7 (victim unidentifiable because face flayed); *Badā'iʿ*, iv, 129, l. 22 (woman's body discovered cut in half, parts separately buried).

[39] *Inbā'* 369, l. 16.

remained there (undiscovered) for eight days and their stench dispersed. Local residents hastened there and found them—in a nude state—strangled among the wine vessels. The prefect (*wālī*) rode forth with his deputy and buried them. He interrogated those familiar with the victims. They also arrested the owner of the property and fined him a trifle. It was rumored among the masses some days later that they had arrested a group selling the victims' personal effects, but this was unverified." Theft was clearly a motive for these murders since the Ḥalabī coveted the women's take from their customers. Yet the details of their lifestyle as al-Ṣayrafī reported in delicious shock imply his concern over a punishment for lewdness that boded worse than the penalty for mere thievery. Murder guaranteed the victims' silence about the Ḥalabī's role in an unsavory relationship, a factor that might mitigate his prosecution if he was arrested. But al-Ṣayrafī also recounted the prefect's indifference to this case. In contrast with prosecuting the insurrection of slaves, the Wālī did not exert himself tracking down the Ḥalabī. Prostitution would seem to have been acknowledged as ubiquitous in society. If its practitioners turned on each other, no threat was posed to the social order or the regime's hegemony.

Both genders were represented in this sample of homicides. Men committed twenty-five murders, women six (81%, 19% respectively). All female perpetrators were slaves, most in Mamlūk households.[40] The men were more diverse socially, a majority being free. Their motives embraced no identifiable prime cause; some seem to have acted out of simple rage.[41] Their chances at evading arrest were good. The chroniclers noted eighteen incidents whose perpetrators were apprehended while twelve escaped. That all the slaves were among those caught again underscores the regime's priority of enforcing its hegemonic status. Crimes committed by members of lower orders against their own class seem to have mattered less to the authorities who troubled themselves minimally over their investigation.

The authorities prosecuted thievery according to the status of its victims rather than the extent of their losses, a proclivity stressed by the chroniclers who decried the violation of property rights. Their

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[40] On females: *Inbāʾ* 425, l. 4; *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 70, l. 10; 83, l. 5; 104, l. 23; 4: 96, l. 8; 461, l. 8 (see note 35).

[41] *Badāʾiʿ*, iv, 129, l. 23 (baker murders apprentice without cause); iv, 130, l. 1 (groom [*ghilmān*] murders milk vendor over trifling dispute).

allusions to arrests indicated the regime's incapacity, or unwillingness, to capture all thieves who ransacked large markets or assaulted prominent persons. In cases of organized theft by gangs or robbery by individuals, a substantial percentage of perpetrators made off with their loot: twenty-three successful arrests, twelve escapes (66%, 34%). Thievery committed by several persons with evidence of advanced planning by criminal networks occurred at about the same rate as robbery by individuals: seventeen and eighteen cases respectively (49%, 51%). The former ranged from seemingly unforeseen eruptions of mob violence during which brigands stood ready to plunder market stalls to elaborately designed procedures that involved laundering stolen property for resale.

Al-Ṣayrafī discussed the case of a worker in the arsenal who routinely pilfered valuable armaments and weaponry.[42] He turned his objects, including ceremonial saddles embossed with silver for use during royal progressions, over to a tailor (*khayyāṭ*) who refashioned and sold them to their mutual profit. Both were bisected. Organized gangs of thieves had a long history throughout cities of the Islamic world and Cairo was no exception. The impact of their operations was a measure of the extreme vulnerability felt by merchants and property owners. Yet they must have been resigned to a high level of risk since the regime could not alleviate urban banditry in any appreciable way. Because pillaging by civilian gangs must be considered along with looting by Mamlūk recruits, craftsmen and merchants expected a substantial loss from theft and presumably figured it into their commodity prices.

The authorities reacted more vigorously to its own property losses or robberies of hallowed shrines which provoked popular outrage. The chroniclers reported six incidents of theft from the royal treasury or mint.[43] These tended to be 'inside jobs' since the perpetrators were employed at or near the crime site and had familiarized themselves with security measures. All were apprehended, although not immediately. They suffered the ultimate fate for their transgressions. The regime executed them publicly as a warning to other

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[42] *Inbā'* 210, l. 5.

[43] *Ḥawādith*, vii, 627, l. 17; *Rawḍ* f. 180, l. 26 (trainees of royal children rob treasury); *Badā'iʿ*, iii, 110, l. 6 (worker in gold vaults steals ingots); iii, 115, l. 9 (gatekeepers at Duhaysha rob treasury); iv, 126, l. 3; 130, l. 18 (thieves rob treasury, strangle doorman); iv, 181, l. 19 (amir's groom robs gold saddles); iv, 492, l. 13; 10, l. 4 (8000 dinars stolen from mint, thief apprehended in Mecca months later).

potential robbers among its staff or clients. Two violations of holy shrines appeared in the chronicles. Late in 872/June-July 1468, a person absconded with the screen (*sitr*) surrounding the sarcophagus of the revered saint, Layth b. Saʿd.[44] When he was captured, the Sultan ordered his hand cut off and display in the streets. A mob gathered and called for his death, although no source mentioned his execution. Early in 889/January-February 1484, a person disguised as a mendicant Sufi who affected long braided hair entered the Qarāfa tomb of Sīdī Abū'l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥarrār and stole its screen. Ibn Iyās mentioned that he had pilfered other tombs in the same way but that his outfit had allayed suspicions. He was flogged and paraded through the streets. Since the screens were fashioned of precious metal, they might bring a high price if melted down. But the paucity of references indicates the relative security of shrines in comparison with the susceptibility of markets and warehouses to plundering. There were no references to thievery of Christian or Jewish holy places.

Less frequent categories of crime are tabulated in the Appendix. The single case of adultery (not tied to murder) involved a Circassian female slave in Qāytbāy's harem who was hanged for her indiscretion with a recruit.[45] She wore the veil which may have concealed her during her rendezvous with the Mamlūk, who suffered castration. Ibn Iyās described the event as exceptional, perhaps the reason for its inclusion. Arson was reported twice, in some detail because of the risk of an uncontrollable conflagration that might destroy a neighborhood.[46] The first instance involved the burning of a fodder magazine (for *darīs* or dried clover) owned by the chief guard (*raʾs nawba*) in the treasurer's district (*darb al-khāzin*). A local resident claimed to have observed a person dressed as a *fallāḥ* sneaking into the structure with a band of construction workers. He was accused of setting the clover on fire. Ibn Iyās noted that this claim was unsubstantiated, but the man was nonetheless arrested, flogged and dismembered (his right hand and foot). Subsequently, he was paraded through the town. Residents called for him to be burned alive but several amirs interceded. The second case resulted in the crucifixion (*shankala*) of a groom (ghilmān) accused of igniting his master's house

[44] *Ḥawādith* vii, 651, l. 10; *Rawḍ* f. 187, l. 16; *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 17, l. 7.
[45] *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 350, l. 5.
[46] *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 107, l. 21; 258, l. 7.

to conceal his robbery. Upon interrogation, he admitted invading several other structures. He was executed at the site of his arson.

Ibn Iyās commented at length on an interesting case of exhumation.[47] In Jumādā II 918/August-September 1512, a retired Mamlūk named Damurdāsh (one of the few criminals identified) who managed the 'Melon House' (*Dār al-Baṭīkh*, possibly a market) was arrested for exhuming cadavers, decapitating them and selling their heads and flesh to Europeans (*Firanj*) who made mummies and poison from them. Upon his arrest, a cache of bones, skulls and limbs was discovered. These were placed in coffins that were loaded onto donkeys and displayed before the Sultan. Al-Ghawrī interrogated Damurdāsh about his acquisition of these body parts. He claimed that Bedouin brought him cadavers from ancient crypts, and admitted to fashioning mummies for sale to Europeans. Persons then came forward testifying that he had exhumed fresh cadavers daily from the desert cemetery. Al-Ghawrī ordered him hanged. He was paraded nude on a camel to the execution site near the Dār al-Baṭīkh.

Five incidents of counterfeiting were reported, three of which mentioned false dirhams. No references were made to gold *dinar*s.[48] While the background of the perpetrators varied, three were connected to the Mamlūk elite. Their punishments included exile, life imprisonment, hand cutting, hanging and torture. The regime reacted severely to counterfeiting since the credibility of its own coinage was already suspect due to repeated debasements. The striking of false currency would undermine the reputation of the government's coins even further. The absence of gold *dinar*s from these cases provides additional evidence that the Sultanate now relied on silver or copper coinage. The two incidents of intoxication both occurred during Ramaḍān.[49] The second involved four individuals from 'the masses' (*al-aʿwām*) who were caught in a garden eating or drinking accompanied by a woman. She fled the scene but the men were flogged, paraded through the streets and imprisoned as a deterrent to visible drunkenness during the Fast.

The appendix lists several other crimes, of which mob violence and pederasty warrant some remarks. The chroniclers noted six erup-

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[47] *Badāʾiʿ*, iv, 275, l. 7.

[48] On counterfeiting: *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 211, l. 16; 318, l. 18; iv, 88, l. 1; 160, l. 13; 162, l. 23.

[49] On intoxication: *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 213, l. 16; iv, 26, l. 8.

tions of violence by street gangs (*zuʿar*) or black slaves.[50] Ibn Iyās's discussion of the *zuʿar* riots depicted rival gangs who paralyzed entire districts of the city. Only in these disturbances did the sources allude to collusion between senior officers and civilian gangs. In his comments about a brawl between two *zuʿar* bands in Būlāq during Jumādā II 913/October-November 1507, Ibn Iyās stated that Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī refused to intervene because one group claimed protection from the Atābak Qurqmās while the other was defended by the Amīr Akhūr, Qānībāy Qarā. The populace suffered their rampaging with no hope for relief from the Sultan who feared alienating two powerful adjutants.

The slave disturbances are interesting because they denote freedom of movement and factional identities. Both Ibn Taghrī Birdī and Ibn Iyās emphasized the magnitude of slave riots, and left an impression of raucous mobs roaming the streets. The inability of owners to control these individuals qualifies any impression that they were effectively demobilized or subdued. Their organization in autonomous factions also suggests a vigorous subculture with its own power structure and hierarchy of leadership.

The pederasty cases were the sole examples of juvenile molestation in the sources.[51] Their circumstances contrasted markedly. The first was committed in Ṣafar of 879/June-July 1476, by a former official on an amir's staff called Shāhīn. He was accused of repeated sexual contact with youthful trainees in the amir's service. He seems to have opted for castration, possibly over execution. The operation was performed by a Jewish surgeon renowned for his expertise. And in fact, this Shāhīn survived to live a long life, presumably relieved of his urges. The second incident occurred in Rabīʿ II 920/May-June 1514. A tailor with the engaging name of Najā b. Timsāḥ violated a ten-year old boy. When the youth yelled for help, the tailor strangled him and cast the body into a well. The boy's mother, upon hearing rumors of the assault, denounced the tailor before the Sultan. When Ibn Timsāḥ confessed, al-Ghawrī ordered him hanged at the site of his molestation. The Sultan may have decreed his castration in advance. The appearance of criminal pederasty only twice does not necessarily connote its rarity. Leslie Peirce has found its occurrence

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[50] On *zuʿar*: *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 240, l. 14; iv, 96, l. 5; 122, l. 16; on slaves: *Ḥawādith*, vii, 650, l. 14; *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 274, l. 18; iv, 163, l. 18.

[51] On pederasty: *Badāʾiʿ*, iii, 96, l. 4; iv, 378, l. 16.

during her investigation of Ḥanafī court records for the town of ʿAynṭāb (Gaziantep) during the tenth/sixteenth century.[52] But she also observed that a death sentence was rarely imposed, the *qādīs* attempting to alter the offenders' behavior rather than taking their lives. The cases in Mamlūk Cairo may therefore represent incidents that attracted the chroniclers's attention precisely because of their sensational appeal. And only one of the perpetrators was executed. An unrepentant thief was as likely to suffer the same fate.

Summation

The incidents of crime reported in the four sources consulted for this study provided a gauge of popular conceptions. They indicate how the privileged and propertied perceived degrees of menace to security of assets and personal safety. They also suggest something about the authors' susceptibility to the sensational or merely intriguing. Many of these incidents would captivate popular fancy even if they were disturbing or repellent. But as mentioned earlier, in contrast with their image in literary works, the chroniclers rarely depicted criminal acts in a positive light. Nor did they indicate wide popular support for them. These narrative writers were more likely to show respect and even grudging admiration for notorious Bedouin bandits who had given their Mamlūk opponents a good fight. It is indeed significant to note in this context that virtually all the Bedouin brigands who were captured and either jailed or executed were named. Very few criminals were so identified, even if the chroniclers described them as widely reviled for their incorrigibility. These criminals were not unknown derelicts in society, yet the historians declined to dignify them with titles. In relative degrees of 'otherness', the Bedouin would appear to have seemed less alien than brigands much closer to home—whose threat was possibly more unsettling.

The chroniclers' own identities are vital to appreciating their perspectives. Three were associated with the Mamlūk elite by descent and one attained a position of medial rank in the civil judiciary. All

[52] Unpublished paper on domestic crime and corrective procedures as depicted in the Ḥanafī court archives in Gaziantep, read at a conference on gender issues in Muslim societies sponsored by the Middle East Center, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 21 November 1993.

therefore belonged to classes disposed to look upon marginal elements in Cairo with ambivalence if not contempt. It is probably true that only a street person can empathize with another. To the prominent and privileged, those on the fringes seemed frightening as well as alien. Yet not all the crimes these authors described were committed by such people. Many of the cases they deemed most serious were carried out by individuals established within elite levels of society, even if their own status was servile. The chroniclers denounced certain acts as criminal because they regarded them as intrinsically evil or disruptive of ordered affairs. This they did regardless of their perpetrators' status, high or low. Perhaps the authors were disposed to acknowledge the Bedouin as members of a recognized social group, however distant from urban life. Their tribal lineages may have resonated with identities embedded in the historians' sense of an esteemed past.

This study also aimed at comparing the chroniclers' allusions to collusion between either Bedouin brigands or urban gangs and senior officers of the Mamlūk oligarchy with Karen Barkey's analysis of relations between the Ottoman imperial bureaucracy and Anatolian bandit gangs. The situation in Mamlūk Egypt during the Sultanate's final years, on the basis of available evidence, does not appear to have paralleled the elaborate and formally sanctioned arrangements of cooption that developed in the Ottoman State throughout the seventeenth century.[53] But Barkey utilized vast archival resources to ferret out a trove of evidence in support of her hypotheses. The analyst of similar tendencies in Mamlūk Egypt can rely on no equivalent documents. Ibn Taghrī Birdī provided one allegation of collusion between Yashbak al-Dawādār and a client tribe, an assertion al-Ṣayrafī disputed. Ibn Iyās referred once to rival gangs of *zuʿar* as clients of two powerful amirs in Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's service. While these incidents should not be ignored, their significance cannot be blown out of proportion to their paucity. They do not constitute grounds for building a scenario comparable to Barkey's for Ottoman Anatolia.

Yet in the vein of Barkey's perceptive discussion, one is encouraged to consider possible implications of these few enticing statements. They are sufficient to indicate the occurrence of collusion.

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[53] Barkey, *Bandits*, chapter six: "State-Bandit Relations, A Blueprint for State Centralization."

And with regard to Yashbak's agenda, there are grounds for discerning a power structure in the Mamlūk oligarchy that differed from its Ottoman counterpart. The Mamlūk system did indeed remain an oligarchy with no loyalty accruing to a revered dynasty as the vital institution legitimating all others. With the exception of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1309–40 C.E.), every influential Mamlūk sultan attained his position as a senior officer, a member of an elite clique. These men regarded all their peers as potential enemies, and sought loyalty from clients diverse enough to affect every social group that possessed military clout—including Bedouin bands or urban gangs. The Mamlūk power structure did not transcend this network of patron-client ties since the system worked effectively for a long time. It certainly left an abiding political legacy in Egypt under Ottoman and even European dominion.

The study raised the issue of disruption as a topos for criticism of the regime's stance as guardian of society. Here the chroniclers expressed their opinions more overtly, if not uniformly. Ibn Taghrī Birdī and Ibn Iyās frequently condemned the regime's handling of Bedouin raiding or urban pillaging for its ineptness. Al-Ṣayrafī defended the government's actions while al-Malaṭī remained neutral. Ibn Taghrī Birdī witnessed only the first year of Qāytbāy's reign and observed the sedition that accompanied a recent enthronement. Ibn Iyās lived through Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign into the Ottoman occupation. Biased against al-Ghawrī for personal reasons, he was disposed to interpret his devastating defeat at Selim's hands as divine retribution for a paranoid and selfish administration. Al-Ṣayrafī, by contrast, openly admired Qāytbāy and sought his favor with a laudatory work. The authors' criticism or endorsement of their rulers' actions, and those of their confidants, therefore do constitute a critique, negative or positive according to the source, of the Sultanate's capacity to fulfill its crucial responsibility: provision of security for its subjects in the capital and countryside. If these narrative works constitute our primary source for factual details about politics in Mamlūk Egypt, then a study comparable to Professor Barkey's may not be feasible. Glimpses provided as appended asides cannot duplicate facts recorded in archival documents. Still, these glimpses are suggestive and warrant attention for the implications they offer.

APPENDIX

Tabulation of Civilian Crimes reported for Cairo

Category	*Cases*	*Punishments*
adultery (as prime offence)	1	execution
arms bearing after curfew	1	imprisonment
arson	2	crucifixion, dismembersment
counterfeiting	5	exile (2), imprisonment (1) hanging (1), torture (2)
exhumation	1	execution
homicide	31	execution upon conviction
(prime offence)	(12 by slaves)	(several cases not proved; no confession)
within families	3	(2 wives, father)
mutilation	3	
victims: men	23	
women	8	
perpetrators: men	25	
women	6	(all slaves)
arrests	18	
escapes	13	
theft as motive	5	
intoxication (during Ramaḍān)	2	flogging, imprisonment
pederasty	2	castration (2?), execution (1)
rioting: zuʿār	3	execution of those captured (2); no prosecution due to patron support (1)
slaves	3	execution of those captured (3)
theft	35	dismemberment, execution (prime offence) flogging, imprisonment
by individual	18	
by group (network)	17	

by slaves	6	execution of those captured
civilian against Mamlūk	5	execution of those caputred
of treasury	6	execution, imprisonment
of shrines	2	dismemberment, flogging
arrests	23	
escapes	12	

Tabulation of Punishments inflicted on Bedouin

Type	*Cases*
bisection	3
crucifixion	2
decapitation	6
flaying	2
hanging	5
jail	17

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE OTTOMANS IN EGYPTIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY DURING OTTOMAN RULE

Michael Winter

After the overthrow of the Mamluk Empire by the Ottomans in late 1516 and early 1517, Egypt ceased to be the center of a great empire as she had been for centuries, and was incorperated into the Ottoman state as a tax-paying province for the next three centuries.[1] The change from Mamluk rule should have been relatively smooth, since like the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was a Sunni country, and had been accustomed to be ruled by Turkish-speaking men, who had been born abroad. Yet the differences in traditions, mentality and temperament between the Egyptians and their new masters were too wide to overlook. Egypt has always had a strong a distinct personality, and could not be easily absorbed in the conquerors' culture. Egyptians have always had a strong sense of identity and patriotism, which deepened the gaps between the people and outsiders. It is true that the Mamluks were also foreigners, but their regime had become thoroughly familiar, and they were a localyzed ruling class, unlike the Ottomans, who administered the province from Istanbul. For example, although the Mamluks themselves were Turcophone, the language of the administration under their rule was Arabic. Under the new regime, all the governors, chief government officials, qadis and soldiers spoke Turkish, which was now also the language of the administration. Thus, the foreign presence in Egypt was much more massive than it had been before.

Research work on the subfield of the history of Ottoman Egypt has been progressing in recent years, and there is a better appreciation of the richness of Egyptian historiography during that period, mostly in Arabic, but also in Turkish and Hebrew. It is important to study Egyptian attitudes toward their Ottoman rulers, yet one must not

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[1] For a concise account of the political and military developments, see P.M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. 1516–1922* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), 33–45.

generalize. The power of the Ottoman Empire was at its peak during the reign of Sultan Süleymān Qānūnī (the Magnificent, 1520–1566), and afterwards there were signs of decline, although not uninterrupted and certainly not a collapse. Yet clearly Istanbul's control of its provinces weakened, and inevitably, the way the Empire was perceived by the Egyptians changed drastically. Naturally, those Egyptians who wrote history came from very different backgrounds and had different education, social connections, views, and interests, all of which are reflected in their historical writings. I have chosen a representative sample of chroniclers.

As could be expected, Egyptian writers had paid attention to its mighty neighbour in the north, but for a long time there was no friction between the Mamluks and the Ottomans, and references to the Ottomans in the works of al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Ibn Iyās and others are fragmentary. During the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481), the conqueror of Constantinople, the tensions rose, as the Ottomans were consolidating their dominance over Anatolia, thus becoming the Mamluks' immediate neighbours. The issue of buffer zones in Anatolia caused later a series of battles between the two empires (1485–91). Although this war ended well for the Mamluks, their fears of their stronger neighbour were not allayed.[2]

This war was fought between Sultans Bayezid II and Qāytbāy, both cautious rulers and basically men of peace. The sources on both sides show that both won the respect of the other side. Bayezid's ready and generous assistance to the Mamluk state, when it faced the Potuguese challange, was appreciated in Cairo. Upon his death, Bayezid was eulogized by Ibn Iyās, the most important chronicler of the time, as *al-ʿādil*, the just, and *al-mujāhid*, warrior for the faith.[3]

Selīm, Bayezid's son and successor, invoked terror. Ibn Iyās was convinced that throughout the negotiations that preceded the decisive war between Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, the Mamluk sultan, and Selīm, the Ottoman sultan was acting in bad faith, his sole purpose being to put the Mamluks off guard by deception and trickery. Indeed,

[2] See C.F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle and London, 1993), 88–103.

[3] Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, ed., Muhammad Mustafa, (Cairo, 1963), iv, 270.

when Selīm decided to go to war, al-Ghawrī's envoy was badly mistreated and even threatened with death.[4]

This is not the place to relate the developments leading to the final clash and the end of the Mamluk state. First Syria, and within a few months Egypt, were annexed by Selīm. What concerns us here is the ushering of the Ottoman regime in Egypt. This is superbly narrated by Muḥammad b. Iyās in the fifth volume of his chronicle *Badā'iʿ al-zuhūr fi waqā'iʿ al-duhūr*. He tells in detail and accurately the whole story—the political, diplomatic and military events leading to the occupation, and then the first six years of Ottoman rule. This is a most valuable work, and has few equivalents in Middle Eastern history or elsewhere in describing day by day how a new regime steps in the shoes of the old one. (Ibn Iyās's contemporary, the Damascene *ʿālim* Ibn Ṭūlūn, also wrote an eyewitness's report of the Ottoman occupation of Damascus.[5] It is an important and honest report, but not as well written and dramatic as that of Ibn Iyās. The nearest parallel that comes to mind is al-Jabarti's description of the French occupation 300 years later).[6] Ibn Iyās does not only report the decisions and moves undertaken by the Ottomans in Egypt (primarily in Cairo), but his writing reflects the people's attitudes and feelings toward their new masters.

Ibn Iyās' hostility towards the Ottoman is obvious from almost every page of his chronicle. Once he admits that they were known for their justice in their own land.[7] Yet his verdict of their regime and behavior in Cairo is negative in the extreme. Of course, no one is free from bias, and Ibn Iyās identified with the fallen Mamluks. He was one of the *awlād al-nās*, "the sons of the (important) people", namely the Mamluks. While they were not allowed to serve in the army except for the lowest ranks, the *awlād al-nās* enjoyed pensions and certain privileges, and naturally idetified with the interests of their families. As a chronicler, Ibn Iyās did not hesitate to

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[4] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ*, v, 45, 60.

[5] Ibn Ṭūlūn, Muḥammad, *Mufākahat al-khillān fi ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed., Muhammad Mustafa (Cairo, 1962–64, 2 vols.). The Ottoman occupation is described in the second volume.

[6] Al-Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib al-āthār fi'l-tarāiim wa'l-akhbār* (Bulaq, 1297/1880), 4 vols. Al-Jabartī also authored two much shorter chronicles covering the French occupation of Egypt: *Ta'rīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr*, ed. and trans. Sh. Moreh (Leiden, 1975) and *Mazhar al-taqdīs bi-dhahāb dawlat al-Faransīs*, ed. H.M. Jawhar and ʿU. al-Dasuqi (Cairo, 1969).

[7] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ*, vol. 5, p. 162

criticize the Mamluks and their government harshly when they were in power, but still he believed their regime to be far better than that which replaced it. His opinions of the Ottomans cannot be described here in detail,[8] but these can be summarized as follows:

The Ottomans are depicted as bad Muslims generally, and in comparison with the Mamluks in particular. This indeed says it all. All of them—Sultan Selīm himself, his officers, his *qāḍī*s, and the soldiers, prove themselves to be bad Muslims by their personal behavior and by the manner in which they treated the civilian population of Egypt. They are barbarians, who are not capable of appreciating the treasures and civilization that fell into their hands. The army is a rabble, and one cannot tell an amir from a simple soldier. The Ottomans neglected the festivities and generosity which the people of Cairo were accustomed to under the Mamluks on occasions such as *mawlid al-nabī*, the Prophet's birthday. The Egyptians missed the colourful parades of the Mamluk army with the equestrian exercises. It did not occur to Ibn Iyās that the Mamluks' pomp was a symptom of degeneration, as against the battle-tested Ottoman troops.

Sultan Selīm is described as a bloodthirsty tyrant, a drinker and a pederast. He does not dispense justice and does not keep his word. He put mamluks to death, often despite promises of safe-conduct. He lacks the "etiquette of kings" (*niẓām al-mulūk*). The majority of the Ottoman soldiers do not fast during the month of Ramaḍān and do not pray. They molest women and young boys. The Ottoman *qāḍī*s are ignorant. Ibn Iyās calls a chief judge "more ignorant than an ass, he understands nothing about the religious law". Generally, the writer complains that the standing of the *sharīʿa* has never been so low. The Ottomans do not apply the *sharīʿa*, and their administrative law, the *qānūm* and *yasaq*, is of extra-Islamic origins. The Egyptians were also shocked by the *sürgün*, the forced banishment to Istanbul of local notables and artisans.

After Selīm's departure and death (in 1520), and the advent of his son Süleymān to the throne, the harshness of the regime seems to have loosened, and even Ibn Iyās softened somewhat his criticism. He remarks: "It is said that Sultan Süleyman is a wise man."[9]

The problem with the chronicle is that it is almost isolated. There

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[8] See M. Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London and New York, 1992), 7–14.

[9] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, vol. 5, p. 363.

are no other contemporary Egyptian chronicles against whom Ibn Iyās's work could be studied. Even worse, he has no continuer.[10] Our chronicler was one of the best, but also the last, representative of the great Mamluk historiography. This tradition stops abruptly and totally after the occupation and it will take a full century before Egyptian historiography will resume, and even then it will do so on a smaller scale and lower level.

It is worth discussing briefly the terminology used in the Arabic historical sources to designate the Ottoman Empire and the land of Egypt. In pre-modern political thinking there was no place for the abstract idea of a state.[11] As is well known, the term *dawla*, designates a dynasty, a concrete line of rulers. I would like to add that in context it also means rule or government, which is, of course, abstract, but without the institutional connotation implied by "state". Ibn Iyās calls the Ottoman ruler Ibn ʿUthmān, his subjects are "*ʿAthāmina*", "*Tarākima*" (Turcomans), while the Mamluks are called by Ibn Iyās and other Arab historians of the period "*Atrāk*", because they spoke Turkish, although in that period they were predominantly Circassians. Later, the Ottoman state is called in Egyptian chronicles *al-dawla al-ʿUthmāniya*, usually in laudatory contexts, or just *al-dawla*, the (central) government. Often the term used is al-Diyār al-Rūmiya, "the land of the Turks". In other contexts, especially when reporting wars between the Ottoman Empire and Christian or Persian (Shiʿi), enemies, the state is predictably identical with the whole Islam: "The Persians (*ʿAjam*) attacked (the territories of) Islam", or "Islam was victorious against the infidels".

When history-writing after Ibn Iyās resumes, the image of the Ottomans improves beyond recognition. As has been pointed out, Ibn Iyās was personally close to the Mamluks, and there was understandably the initial shock of the military occupation: The Egyptians (and the Syrians before them) had never seen an army of the size of the Ottomans, and the experience of the occupation must have been traumatic. In later decades, the Egyptians had to accept

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[10] ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Diyārbakrī, an Ottoman *qāḍī* who wrote a chronicle in Turkish of the two and a half years from where Ibn Iyās stops. I have discussed this manuscript in "An Arabic and a Turkish Chronicle from the Beginning of Ottoman Rule in Egypt: A Comparative Study", in *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 35 (1994), *Aspects of Ottoman History*, ed. A Singer and A. Cohen, 318–326.

[11] The writings of the *falāsifa*, primarily al-Fārābī, (d. 950), and of course, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), are important, but non-typical exceptions.

reality. This was not too difficult, since the Ottomans adjusted their policies to the conditions in Egypt and the Empire, or at least its ruling dynasty, was conceived as impeccably Islamic. It is certain that by annexing the holy cities in the Hijaz and Palestine and coming in close contact with the venerable centers of Islamic learning and worship in Cairo and Damascus, the Empire itself was becoming more orthodox. Also, the Ottoman regime under Süleymān was at its best. The great sultan is called *mujaddid al-dīn fi'l-qarn al-ʿāshir*, "the renewer of the religion of Islam in the tenth *hijrī* century".[12] ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, the important mystic, who was also a historian of Sufism and a major social commentator, calls Süleymān *al-qutb al-ẓāhir*, "the visible Axis", a most significant Sufi term.[13] It is important to note that many of those who wrote history at the time were men of religion, *ʿulamāʾ* and Sufis, and these had little reason to complain of the Ottoman authorities, who supported them generously.

Perhaps the most influential Arabic-writing historian in the sixteenth century was Qutb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī (d. 1582). He was of Indian origin and lived in Mecca, yet he was familiar with the developments in Egypt, the Hijaz, and to a certain extent even in Istanbul. He wrote a detailed account of the Ottomans' exploits in the Yemen, and also a lengthy history of the Ottomans up to his time, which comprises a great part of his book about the history of Mecca.[14] His works provided information for Egyptian historians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even later. No doubt, his admiration for the Empire had a strong impact on other writers. Marʿī b. Yūsuf al-Karmī al-Ḥanbalī, a Palestinian *ʿālim*, who lived in Egypt, and wrote a history of that country, as well as a panegyric of the Ottoman dynasty, clearly borrowed from al-Nahrawālī's history of the Ottomans.

It is worth looking briefly at Marʿī's praises of the Ottoman dynasty, since these recur in chronicles of the same period (the first half of

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[12] Muḥammad ib. Abī'l-Surūr al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *al-Minaḥ al-raḥmāniya fi'l-Dawla al-ʿUthmāniya*, ed. Layla al-Sabbagh (Damascus, 1995), 105.

[13] See M. Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1982), 268, citing al-Shaʿrānī's *al-Akhlāq al-Matbūliyya*.

[14] Al-Nahrawālī, Qutb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-iʿlām bi-aʿlām bayt Allāh al-ḥarām*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Beirut, 1964, new printing); idem., *al-Barq al-Yamānī fi'l-fatḥ al-ʿUthmānī*, ed. Hamad al-Jasir (Riyad, 1967).

the seventeenth century).[15] The Ottomans are lauded as the most religious dynasty in the annals of Islam. They earned this by their strict adherence to the rule of the s*harīʿa*, and by treating their subjects with justice, defending and expanding the lands of Islam, respecting and supporting men of religion by establishing *awqāf*, taking great care of the *ḥajj* routes, and sending food and financial support to the residents of Mecca and Medina, building mosques, and generally acting as ideal Muslim rulers. One honor that Marʿī b. Yūsuf does not ascribe to the Ottomans, nor were they claiming it at the time, was the title of caliphs. The writer says that the Ottomans were ruling over wider territories than any other Islamic state in history. Then he adds, as in an afterthought, that the Umayyads and the ʿAbbasids had vaster empires, but they were caliphs (unlike the Ottomans, who are not).

Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Isḥāqī, another chronicler from the same period, writes in a similar vein.[16] He tells about the corruption that had been spreading in the Mamluk state toward the end of their rule. God answered the prayers of the oppressed and sent them the Ottomans as liberators. Then he speaks about the merits of the Ottomans: Constantinople is now the source of pride and excellence. It has the most accomplished people in every trade. Its *ʿulamāʾ* are the greatest in Islam (sic!). He goes on giving detailed information concerning the quarters, houses, mosques, etc. in the Ottoman capital. Says al-Isḥāqī: "We have looked in the history of past states and kings and have not found another state that has the perfect order of the Ottomans, and none was more careful in keeping the Holy Law and more respectful of *ʿulamāʾ* and in providing for the poor and the residents of the two Noble Sanctuaries (*al-ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*). We ask God to preserve the Ottoman dynasty to the end of time."[17]

Sultan Selīm is described as a man of harsh character; this was too famous to be denied. After all, his appellation was Yavuz, the Grim. Nevertheless, he cuts an impressive figure as a very able and

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[15] See M. Winter, "A Seventeenth-Century Panegyric of the Ottoman Dynasty," *Asian and African Studies*, 13 (1979), 130–156.

[16] Al-Isḥāqī, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī b. Abī'l-Fatḥ, *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal fimā taṣarrafa fī Miṣr min arbāb al-duwal* (Cairo, n.d.).

[17] Al-Isḥāqī, *Akhbār al-uwal*, 300.

just king, a good Muslim, who listened to his religious guides, and a cultured man, who wrote poetry in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. (Supposedly, he left an Arabic verse which he wrote with his own hand on a wall in the pavilion where the Nilometer, *miqyās*, was located.) After winning Syria on the battlefield of Marj Dabiq, Selīm visited a few places in Syria and Palestine, and wherever he arrived, he was kind to the people. He did not abolish the *awqāf* of the mamluks, his defeated enemies, ignoring the advice of his vizier to do so.[18]

That Süleyman is highly praised is hardly surprising, but even his successors, Selīm II, Murād III, Mehmed III and Ahmed I, who by all accounts were much weaker sultans, are presented as great rulers, who fought for Islam, supported religious causes, notably the Holy Cities and the pilgrimage.[19]

The historiography of the period divides the coverage of events into what has been called by scholars "the Sultan-Pasha" type of chronicle. After introducing the information about the sultan, there comes an account of the governors of Egypt whom he appointed. Owing to the strategic and economic importance of Egypt, the pashas who were sent to administer the country were mostly high-ranking and able rulers and military commanders. The chroniclers characterize each governor according to personality, (popular or unpopular, just, efficient in handling crime, and the like), and religious profile (he liked *'ulamā'* and saintly men, he was a Sufi or a *faqīh*). The majority of the pashas in the sixteenth century apparently satisfied the expectations of the public in the all-important religious sphere; the few exceptions were dismissed and punished by the sultan, according to the Egyptian chroniclers.[20]

During the incumbency of Üveys Pasha (1587–91), military discipline broke down for the first time. The troops of the large Ottoman garrison demanded among other things to deny local Egyptians (*awlād al-'Arab*) certain privileges that were considered the monopoly of the Turkish-speaking soldiers, such as owning white mamluks. The sources also describe one of the pashas as "hating the *awlād al-'Arab*"'. Later, in the seventeenth century, many *awlād al-'Arab* succeeded in enlisting in the Ottoman regular *ojaqs* (regiments), and the Ottoman sol-

[18] Al-Isḥāqī, *Akhbār al-uwal*, 305–307.
[19] Al-Isḥāqī, *Akhbār al-uwal*, 310–313.
[20] M. Winter, "The Islamic Profile and the Religious Policy of the Ruling class in Ottoman Egypt", *Israel Oriental Studies*, 10 (1988), 132–145.

diers successfully pressured the authorities to dismiss them from military service. It seems from the way it is reported in the chronicles that the matter was regarded more in terms of law and order than an injustice done to native Egyptians. The military was considered traditionally the domain of the Turks.[21]

It is important to point out that the fact that the Arabic-speaking population was ruled by Turkish-speakers of a foreign race never diminished the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire before the nineteenth century. Even antipathy on the part of Egyptians towards Turks, which did exist, had nothing to do with the genuine loyalty that most chroniclers felt for the Ottoman dynasty.

Perhaps the most eloquent admirer of the Ottomans was Muḥammad b. Abī'l Surūr al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī (died after 1661), the leading historian of the first half of the seventeenth century. He is the author of several chronicles, among them a book about the history of the Ottomans, naturally with a strong emphasis on Egypt.[22] Ibn Abī'l-Surūr was a member of a famous aristocratic Sufi family of *ashrāf*, who also claimed descent from Abū Bakr, the first caliph. The Bakris would play a central role in Egypt's religious and public life in the 18th and l9th and even the 20th century. Already the historian's father and grandfather had enjoyed a privileged position, and had close ties with some of the pashas, the governors of Egypt.

The writer emphasizes the strong orthodoxy of the Ottomans. For example, he describes Hajji Bektash, the founder and eponym of the notoriously heterodox dervish order of the Bektashis as absolutely pure, despite the fact that infidels attributed themselves to him later. Ibn Abī'l-Surūr also praises those shaykhs around Sultan Mehmed II who put to death, with the Sultan's apparent approval, a Ḥurūfī mystic, who was a pro-Shī'ī heretic.[23]

The writer tells the story, which he read probably in al-Nahrawālī's book, about the fall of the Mamluks. A mamluk soldier cheated and then beat a merchant in the marketplace. A saintly man (*wālī*), who witnessed the scene, cursed the whole Mamluk regime. Then he had a dream that angels were sweeping the mamluks with brooms into

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[21] See M. Winter, "Turks, Arabs and Mamluks in the Army of Ottoman Egypt", *Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 72 (1980), 97–122.

[22] See note 12 above.

[23] Al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī, *al-Minaḥ*, 22, 33.

the Nile. He woke up to the sound of the Mamluk army getting ready to march to northern Syria, where it would be wiped out by the Ottomans.[24]

Al-Bakrī's Sultan Selīm is, like Isḥāqi's, an ideal ruler. The author mentions that after the conquest, Selīm reappointed the four chief *qāḍī*s, each representing one of the orthodox *madhāhib*.[25] Al-Bakrī should have known that the Sultan's measure, even if it took place in reality, was only temporary: Throughout the Ottoman period there was only one chief *qāḍī* in Egypt (as well as in other provinces), and he was invariably Ḥanafī and Turkish-speaking, and was sent from Istanbul. Süleymān is specially praised for designating the *dhimmīs'* *jawālī* tax for the benefit of poor *'ulamā'* and pious residents (*mujāwirūn*) of the Ḥaramayn. This arrangement was almost nonexistent under the Mamluks, says al-Bakrī.[26] Sultan Aḥmed is portrayed almost as a saint. It is mentioned that he was ready to sacrifice everything he owned rather than make peace with the Persians. It is told on the authority of dignitaries who had been present at that sultan's deathbed that he saw Abū Bakr and other Rāshidūn caliphs before he died.[27]

Again, Süleyman's successors are getting the credit for the conquests which the Empire won during their reign, such as Cyprus, Yemen, Tunis, etc. Of course, the fact that after Süleymān the sultans no longer led their armies personally is passed over in silence.

Among the pashas who governed Egypt, al-Bakrī has the highest esteem for Mehmet Pasha (1607–11), whose resolute suppression of the unruly soldiers won him the epithet Qul Qıran, "the breaker of the (rebellious) soldiers". He punished the soldiers, who had killed a governor, and abolished the illegal *ṭulba* tax, which they levied from the fellaheen. After restoring the sultan's authority, he reorganized the army and reformed the tax system to be more equitable. Al-Bakrī wrote a lengthy and valuable account of these events.[28]

Of special interest is the Hebrew historiography of Egypt in that period. There are very few works—Jews in that period were not given to writing history—but two works stand out. One is a chron-

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[24] Al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *al-Minaḥ*, 81–82.
[25] Al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *al-Minaḥ*, 89–90.
[26] Al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *al-Minaḥ*, 126–129.
[27] Al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *al-Minaḥ*, 286–289.
[28] Muḥammad b. Abī'l-Surūr al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, "Kashf al-kurba fī raf' al-ṭulba", ed. 'Abd al-Rahim 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Rahim, *al-Majalla al-ta'rīkhiyya al-Miṣriyya*, 23 (1976), 291–314.

icle by Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali, who lived in Candia in the 16th century, and therefore does not belong, properly speaking, to Egyptian historiography.[29] Yet the the information for chapters concerning developments in Egypt must have been given to him by a source or sources on the spot, and reflect direct and genuine reactions of Egyptian Jewry. Capsali regarded the Ottoman victories against the Mamluks, and also the Venetians, as heaven-sent; the Ottoman occupation of Palestine and Egypt had messianic overtones in Jewish perception. The Circassians are expressly called "enemies to the Jews" and the Ottomans are described as "gracious, or charitable, kings" (*malkhe ḥesed*).[30] Naturally, the Ottomans, Sultan Bayezid II in particular, are praised for granting asylum to those Jews who had been exiled from the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily. What Capsali, and many other writers, as well as modern historians, tend to overlook, is that Qāytbāy, the Mamluk sultan, gave the refugees the same kind of asylum in his domains. This brought an influx of Sephardi Jews into Egypt who greatly invigorated that community.

The suppression of the rebellion of Ahmed Pasha, "the Traitor" (*al-Khā'in*), which was put down during the festival of Purim, was celebrated by the Jews as the Egyptian Purim, in which the community was again delivered from the persecution of a vicious vizier by a friendly king, this time, young Sultan Süleymān. The loyalty of the Jews to the Ottoman state is also discernible in the Rabbinical responsa of the period.[31]

Writing approximately one century and a half after Capsali, Rabbi Yosef Sambari, an Egyptian historian, wrote the history of Islam up to 1672.[32] Sambari surveys quickly the various Islamic dynasties, but his historical coverage is detailed only in the chapters discussing the Ottoman Empire, especially since the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. It is clear that the author had access to the main Arabic sources, and that he had also consulted Capsali's chronicle. He also repeats many of the latter's laudatory expressions for the Ottomans. Yet, as Shimon Shtober, the editor of the text, rightly points out, after a

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[29] Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ed. A. Shmuelevitz, Sh. Simonson and M. Benayahu, (3 vols., Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 1976–1983), in Hebrew.

[30] Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, 141–142, 218–219.

[31] See I.M. Goldman, *The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra* (New York, 1970), 153.

[32] Yosef ben Yitzhak Sambari, *Sefer Divrei Yosef*, ed., Sh. Shtober (Jerusalem, 1994). In Hebrew.

century and a half of Ottoman rule in Egypt and the decline that had set out in that country and affected also the Jewish community, gone were the messianic hopes, and several incidents of persecution and harassment of Jews are reported. Of course, it is realized that the Ottoman government was the ultimate protector against persecution and bigotry, but the enthusiasm is no longer there.[33]

So far we have discussed historic works written by religious scholars. There were historical writings by men who were in the service of the army as scribes and bureaucrats. These date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Of course, the political setting had profoundly changed by then. The Empire was past its peak, and its ability to control the province closely all but disappeared. The pashas who were so powerful in the 16th century, had to share their power with the beys and other army officers in the next century. The pasha was still a strong figure (if he had the right personality), and he could tip the balance in the struggles between political factions, by making an appointment, or putting to death a military grandee, with or without Istanbul's permission. In the 18th century, however, the pasha was usually a mere symbol, representing the authority of Istanbul.

Two Turkish manuscripts dating from the mid-17th century represent the period's historical approach. The writers no longer identify with the Empire or with Egypt. Their true interests lie with the army that is stationed in Egypt that has an identity and interests of its own that are not always compatible with these of the imperial army. One writer is 'Ali Efendi, an obscure scribe in one of the Egyptian regiments,[34] and the other a short chronology.[35] Both works do not enrich us with information unknown from other sources, but the writers' political and historical views are interesting. They represent the ethos and interests of the Egyptian troops (Mıṣır qulları) as opposed to the Qapı qulları, the military slaves of the Sultan. It must be emphasized again that both groups are loyal to the sultan and both are Turcophone. The differences are in interests, lifestyle, and mentality: For example, the so-called "Egyptians" considered themselves better Muslims.

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[33] Yosef ben Yitzhak Sambari, *Sefer Divrei Yosef*, 39.

[34] M. Winter, "'Alī Efendi's 'Anatolian Campaign Book': A defence of the Egyptian Army in the Seventeenth Century," *Turcica* 15 (1983), 267–309.

[35] A *Chronicle of the Pashas of Egypt.* (Ms. 1050 Muzaffer Ocak collection, Ankara University).

Of far greater importance as an historical source is the chronicle of a military officer, al-Amīr Aḥmad al-Damurdāshī Katkhudā ʿAzabān, the author of *al-Durra al-muṣāna fī akhbār al-kināna* about the political events in Egypt and the power struggles among the various military units and their officers.[36] The Ottoman Empire is called *al-dawla*, the (central) government, or *al-dawla al-Rūmiya*, which is perhaps not a disrespectful expression, but it does underline the distance between the writer's world and the remote center of power. It is no coincidence that earlier admirers of the Ottomans, like al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī or al-Isḥāqī, did not use this name. The regime in Egypt is called by Damurdāshī "the Mamluk governrnent", (*dawlat al-Mamālīk*), as it appears in the book's title: *Fī akhbār mā waqaʿa bi-Miṣr fī dawlat al-Mamālīk*. The Egyptian soldiers are referred to as *ahl Miṣr*, the people of Egypt.

One can say that Aḥmad Shalabī (Çelebi) b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī, the important chronicler in the first half of the 18th century, who had the background of an *ʿālim* and not a military man, identifies more clearly with Egyptian society in a broader sense. He recognizes, of course, the role of the sultan as the leading force of Islam.[37] This is clear not only in expressing joy about the victory of "Islam", but perhaps, more significantly, in the total lack of objection to obey the periodical orders from Istanbul to send a few thousand soldiers to the Empire's wars. Yet, the text reveals at times the tensions between Cairo and Istanbul, the weakening of Ottoman power with regards to Egypt, and clearer signs of friction between Arabic-speaking people and Turks. For example: when the spokesmen for the Egyptians protested against certain taxes proposed by the famous financial adviser, Yāsīf al-Yahūdī, they declared they would not accept such an act of injustice, the way it is applied in Syria (al-Sham). "That is not going to happen in our Egypt" (*wa-hādhā lā yatimmu bi-Miṣrinā*)![38]

A certain arrogant Ottoman chief *qāḍī* declared upon his arrival to Cairo that he would renew (*yujaddidu*) the Egyptians' religion.

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[36] Al-Damurdāshī, al-Amīr Aḥmad, *al-Durra al-muṣāna fī akhbār al-kināna*, ed. ʿAbd al-Rahim ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Rahim (Cairo, 1989). Idem, *al-Damurdāshī's Chronicle of Egypt: 1688–1755*, ed. and trans. D. Crecelius and ʿA. Bakr (Leiden and New York, 1991).

[37] Aḥmad Shalabī (Çelebi) b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī, *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarāʾ wa'l-bāshāt al-mulaqqab bi-ta'rīkh al-ʿAynī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Rahim ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Rahim (Cairo, 1978).

[38] Shalabī, *Awḍaḥ*, 200.

Later, when he got into some kind of trouble, the Egyptians said to him in biting sarcasm: "Oh, Shaykh al-Islam, you were the one who came to Egypt to renew the people's religion for them?"[39]

By the 18th century, it became routine that the beys would dismiss the pasha, force him to descend from his residence in the Citadel, appoint one of them as the acting governor, and ask the sultan for a new pasha. This awkward situation was known in Istanbul, of course. Aḥmad Shalabī quotes an edict sent from the sultan to the Egyptian military grandees. The sultan accuses them (rightly) of getting into the habit of dismissing his viziers (namely, their governors), thereby showing lack of respect toward himself, "as if you were kings and sultans and we the poor subjects. This time we have forgiven you, but beware not to repeat this behavior. If you do it again, you will have only yourselves to blame!"[40] The chronicler, who produces this pitiful text, must have been aware of the depth to which the sultan's authority had sunk. No wonder that a newly-appointed pasha told the beys: "Don't worry about a thing and don't fear. God willing, everything will be in order, since you are the sultan's trustees in his land and I am only your guest. You are the only ones responsible for the sultan's land."[41]

Finally, there is al-Jabartī's monumental work written during the transition of Egypt from an Ottoman province into semi-independent country, although al-Jabartī could not have known it yet. In al-Jabartī's chronicles there are clear expressions of deep dissatisfaction with the Ottoman state as it was in his time, but also the awareness that there was no alternative to lead the realm of Islam, as the French occupation made abundantly clear. Yet he was sharply critical of the behaviour of the Ottoman troops, whom he considered as bad Muslims, like Ibn Iyās 300 years earlier. He regarded Mehmed ʿAlī's troops as Ottoman, and disliked them accordingly. Reporting the massacre of the Mamluks by the pasha's troops, al-Jabartī's sympathy is entirely with the former. He also prefers the Wahhābīs to the Empire's forces, believing that they were better Muslims. As is well known, after the French withdrawal from Egypt and the return of the Ottomans, al-Jabartī wrote his *Mazhar al-taqdīs*, in which he

[39] Shalabī, *Awḍaḥ*, 315.
[40] Shalabī, *Awḍaḥ*, 631.
[41] Shalabī, *Awḍaḥ*, 321.

flatters them.[42] For a religious Muslim like him, everything seemed better compared to the French infidels.

Let us move another century forward and speak briefly about another Egyptian history of the Ottoman Empire, written, of course, under entirely different circumstances. The author is Muḥammad Farīd, the leader of the Egyptian Nationalist Party, *al-Hizb al-Waṭanī*.[43] The book appeared in two editions, in 1909 and 1912 and bears the title *Ta'rīkh al-dawla al-ʿAliyya al-ʿUthmāniya*. The ideology of the Nationalist movement was among other things pro-Ottoman and Islamic. (Egypt was under British occupation since 1882, and was formally a part of the Ottoman Empire.) In the words of the author, the Empire was a source of pride for every Easterner (Easternism was also a dominant ideology those days), for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It defended the faith of Islam against the ambitions of the European powers. All its subjects, regardless of religion or race enjoyed equality and peace, more than the subjects of the so-called civilized states.[44]

Farīd criticizes the early Ottomans for their practice of princely fratricide. Instead of killing the princes, the Ottomans should have followed the example of the European royal houses, where the princes were assigned military commands. Instead, the Ottomans relied for their defense on European or Circassian converts to Islam, who had never been loyal, and continued to serve the interests of their native countries.[45]

Discussing Ottoman rule in Egypt, Farīd continues the same line of thought. The Ottomans' big mistake was allowing the purchase and the importation of Mamluks into Egypt. This brought about a system of injustice and exploitation, and forced many Egyptians to emigrate, which in turn caused the decline of agriculture. It is not suprising, therefore, that Farīd highly praises Mehmed ʿAlī for exterminating the Mamluks, who are described as the source of all evil.[46]

In the first edition, in 1909, the author calls Sultan ʿAbdul-Hamīd II by all his lofty titles, *ghāzī*, caliph, etc. When the book mentions

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[42] See I.K. Poonawala, "The Evolution of al-Gabartī's Historical Thinking as Reflected in the Muẓhir and the ʿAgā'ib," *Arabica* 15 (1968), 270–278.

[43] Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta'rīkh al-Dawla al-ʿAliyya al-ʿUthmāniyya*, ed. Iḥsan Haqqi (Second ed., Beirut, 1983).

[44] Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta'rīkh*, 20–22.

[45] Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta'rīkh*, 276.

[46] Muḥammad Farīd, *Ta'rīkh*, 194–195, 373, 407.

the killing of Osman II by his soldiers, in 1622, Farīd does not mince words to denounce this terrible, unspeakable crime. It stands to reason that what was on his mind was not merely the historic precedent but Sultan ʿAbdul-Hamīd's paranoia about political assassination. The second edition, however, was published in 1912, after the fall of ʿAbdul-Hamīd. Now Farīd calls him a tyrant and bestows all the possible honorary titles on his succesor, "the constitutional caliph, the just, *Amīr al-muʾminīn*, Mehmet Reshat V, who has restored Islam to the days of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the just caliph.[47]

As is known, Muḥammad Farīd's life was tragic and he died in exile, bitter and disappointed. He supported the Ottoman war effort, and hoped that the Empire would liberate Egypt from the British. Yet, when he arrived in Istanbul as a refugee, he overestimated his own importance and his ability to persuade the Turkish government to make another effort for Egypt. In his memoirs he expressed his bitterness at the Turks, and his suspicions about their motives and plans for Egypt. Thus ended Farīd's unfortunate love affair with the Ottomans.[48]

There was a tendency in modern Arab, and also Egyptian historiography to attribute the decline of the world of Islam in the late Middle Ages (approximately the second half of the 11th century) to the Turks. Since the Ottoman Empire absorbed the Arab Middle East in the 16th century, it has often been accused of being responsible for the region's troubles. Recent years, with the progress of the study of history of the Ottoman Empire everywhere, including the Arab world, the former attitudes have been greatly corrected and nuanced.[49]

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[47] Muḥammad Farīd, *Taʾrīkh*, 23, 276, 710.

[48] See I. Gershoni and J. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationalism. 1900–1930* (New York, 1986), 28–30.

[49] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz M. al-Shināwī, *al-Dawla al-ʿUthmāniyya, dawla Islāmiyya muftarā ʿalayha* (4 vols., Cairo, 1980–1986).

THE EGYPTIAN-YEMENI SYMBIOSIS AS REFLECTED (OR UNREFLECTED) IN OTTOMAN-ERA CHRONICLES

Jane Hathaway

This essay describes an historical and historiographical expedition that I recently undertook, and why this expedition turned toward Yemen. My original objective was to unravel the origins of the two rival political and military factions that dominated Egypt's political life from roughly 1640–1730: the Fiqārīs (from Dhū'l-Fiqār) and the Qāsimīs (from Qāsim). Nowhere in the origin traditions of these factions is a Yemeni connection clearly asserted, nor was I predisposed to find one. Like most historians of Ottoman Egypt, I was aware that Egypt, conquered by the Ottomans in 1517, was strategically linked to Yemen for its first century and a half as an Ottoman province. Yemen was conquered by an Ottoman governor of Egypt, Süleymān Pasha, in 1538, and Egypt played a key role in Yemen's administration from that time until the armies of the Zaydi Shi'ite *imām* expelled the Ottoman regime in 1636. Governors of Yemen were often reassigned to Egypt and vice versa. Soldiers based in Egypt were frequently dispatched to Yemen to fight the Zaydis and to perform garrison duty. In addition, Yemen was the Ottoman front line in the defense against the Portuguese threat in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—a defense in which Egypt played a key role.[1] Even after the Ottoman ouster from Yemen, the Red Sea coffee trade would perpetuate the connection between Yemen and Egypt.[2]

Given these profound, even symbiotic, strategic and economic links between Egypt and Yemen under the Ottomans, why have historians

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[1] See, for example, Shams al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Muwazzi'ī (fl. 1618–1622), *Dukhūl al-'Uthmāniyyīn al-uwal ilā'l-Yaman*, ed. 'Abdallah Muḥammad al-Ḥabashī (Beirut, 1986), 86ff.; G.W.F. Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, 1511–1574*, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, vol. 26, no. 4 (Urbana, IL, 1942); M. Yakub Mughul, "Portekizlilerle Kızıldeniz'de Mücadele ve Hicaz'da Osmanlı Yerleşmesi hakkında bir Vesika," *Belleten* 2, 3–4 (1965): 37–48.

[2] See, for example, Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries*, 2 vols. (London, 1743–1745), i, 204; M. Tuchscherer, "Le Pèlerinage de l'émir

of Ottoman Egypt largely ignored Yemen? I would hazard the hypothesis that the secondary scholarship reflects the intense localism by which most of the primary narrative sources are circumscribed. The Arabic chronicles of Ottoman Egypt, up to and including that of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (1754–1825),[3] concentrate heavily on Cairo. Ottoman Yemen, for its part, produced a whole spectrum of local historical traditions, including those of Zabid, best represented by Ibn al-Daybaʿ; Aden, best represented by Abū Makhrāma; and Sanʿāʾ), best represented by Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn.[4] One can, in addition, speak of a distinct Zaydi tradition, exemplified by Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, and a Shāfiʿī tradition, exemplified by Ibn al-Daybaʿ. The bulk of these histories were, moreover, composed either before the Ottoman conquest or after the Ottoman ouster; thus, they do not share the administrative or elite sensibilities of Ottoman provincial chronicles.

There are, to be sure, several key chronicles that adopt a "bird's-eye" view that encompasses both central and regional concerns. Surely the most valuable "centrist" chronicle of Yemen is Quṭb al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Nahrawālī al-Makkī's *Al-Barq al-yamānī fī'l-fatḥ al-ʿUthmānī*.[5] But these centrist chronicles tend to be fixated on governors and sultans, to the virtual exclusion of more sustained levels of interprovincial contact, notably trade and religious exchange. Indeed, this criticism could also be leveled against the local chronicles.

As a result of these different tendencies and circumstances, Ottoman Egypt and Ottoman Yemen developed separate historiographical traditions, and secondary scholarship has, arguably, inherited this mutual

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Sulaymân Ğâwiš al-Qazduglî, sirdâr de la caravane de al Mekke en 1739," *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988), 155–206; André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1973–1974), i, 156ff.; J. Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlı*s (Cambridge, 1997), 134–138.

[3] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan al-Jabartī, *ʿAjāʾib al-athār fī'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār*, 7 vols. (Cairo, 1958–1967).

[4] Abū'l-Ziyyā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Shaybānī al-Daybaʿ al-Zabīdī (1461–1537), *Bughyat al-mustafīd fī taʾrīkh madīnat Zabīd*, ed. ʿAbdallah al-Ḥabashī (Sanʿāʾ, 1979); idem., *Kitāb Qurrat al-ʿuyūn bi-akhbār al-Yaman al-maymūn*, 2 vols., ed. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Akūʿ al-Ḥawālī (Cairo, 1977); idem., *Tuḥfat al-zaman fī faḍāʾil ahl al-Yaman*, ed. Sayyid Kusrawī Ḥasan (Beirut, 1992). Abū ʿAbdallah al-Ṭayyib b. ʿAbdallah b. Aḥmad Abū Makhrāma (1465–1540), *Taʾrīkh thughr ʿAdan wa tarājim ʿulamāʾiha*, ed. ʿAlī Ḥasan ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 2nd printing (Beirut, 1987); Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāʾim b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (1625–1689), *Ghāyat al-amānī fī akhbār al-quṭr al-yamānī*, 2 vols (Cairo, 1968).

[5] Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nahrāwalī al-Makkī (1511–1582), *Al-Barq al-yamānī fī'l-fatḥ al-uthmānī* (Riyadh, 1968).

exclusivism, although the breach has begun to be filled by scholarship on Red Sea commerce, notably the work of Michel Tuchscherer.[6] How can historians overcome this exclusivism? An obvious strategy would be to investigate Yemeni and central Ottoman, as well as specifically Egyptian, sources. Over and above the sources, however, we must consider the context within which these sources were prepared. The investigation of the Fiqārī and Qāsimī factions offers a suggestive case study of the revelations such a contextual approach can yield.

Arabic chronicles of the early eighteenth century present two interlocking myths of the two factions' origins. According to the first myth, the factions date to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt from the Mamluk sultanate in 1517, when Dhū'l-Fiqār and Qāsim, two sons of a Mamluk grandee, quarreled while displaying their equestrian skills before the victorious Ottoman sultan Selim I.[7] The second myth, for its part, emphasizes two bedouin blocs with which the Fiqārīs and Qāsimīs were allied: respectively, the Saʿd and the Ḥarām. The major exponents of this latter myth are the three Arabic chronicles known collectively as the Damūrdāshī group, all composed in the early eighteenth century.[8] By the late seventeenth century, according to the latest and most complete of the three chronicles, Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damurdāshī's *Al-Durra al-muṣāna fī akhbār al-kināna*, "the government of Egypt was in two factions (*farqayn*), Saʿd and Ḥarām, Tubbāʿī and Kulaybī, [Ḥusaynī] and Yazīdī; the Husaynīs' flag was white, and the Yazīdīs' flag was red," and the chronicler goes on to note the difference between their lances.[9]

It is the "Tubbāʿī and Kulaybī" opposition that offers a first clue to a Yemeni connection, for "Tubba" was the title of the king of the ancient Yemeni kingdom of Ḥimyar. "Kulayb," meanwhile, would

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[6] See his edition of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan al-Baḥkalī, *Quintessence de l'or du règne du Chérif Muḥammad b. Aḥmad*, ed. and trans. M. Tuchscherer as *Imams, notables et bédouins du Yémen au XVIII^e siècle* (Cairo, 1992).

[7] Aḥmad Çelebi b. ʿAbd al-Ghanī (c. 1737), *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarā' wa'l-bāshāt*, ed. A.A. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (Cairo, 1978), 283–284; al-Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib*, i, 67–71.

[8] For a full description of these chronicles, see P.M. Holt, "Ottoman Egypt (1517–1798): An Account of Arabic Historical sources," in P.M. Holt, ed., *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London, 1968); and idem., "The Career of Kūchūk Muhammad (1676–94)," *BSOAS* 26 (1963), 269–287.

[9] Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damūrdāshī (c. 1755), *Al-Durra al-muṣāna fī akhbār al-kināna*, London, British Museum, MS Or. 1073–1074, p. 2.

appear to allude to early Islamic history. The name is a diminutive of Kalb; the Kalb were a Yemeni, or southern Arab, tribal group who supported the Umayyad Marwān for caliph against Ibn al-Zubayr and the northern Arabs of Qays following the death of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya in 683 C.E. But Kulayb b. Rabīʿa was also a legendary pre-Islamic Qaysī leader who triggered the battle of Basūs between the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib.[10] In the medieval period, the Kulayb appear as a branch of the Qaysī Rabīʿa tribal grouping based in Saʿda, a town in the interior of Yemen, north of Sanʿā'; meanwhile, an Āl Kulayb ("people of Kulayb") still exists in the Hadramawt.[11]

This second origin myth, then, seems to invoke the ancient rivalry between northern and southern, or Qaysi and Yemeni, Arabs, although it is not entirely clear which faction represents Qays and which Yemen. At the least, this rivalry could explain the color dichotomy, for white is associated with Yemen, and red with Qays.[12] On the other hand, red was the royal color of the Tubbas of Ḥimyar; in fact, the name Ḥimyar comes from the Tubbas' habit of wearing red garments.[13]

There appears, furthermore, to be a Yemeni link to the Ḥarām and Saʿd bedouin groupings. The well-known fifteenth-century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta encountered the Banū Ḥarām in the town of Ḥali in the northernmost part of Yemen, on the border of the Hijaz.[14] It seems logical that they should be known as Ḥarām since they were in relatively close proximity to the Ḥarām al-Sharīf, that is, the holy mosque of Mecca. Indeed, Ḥali was the southern limit of the *sharīf* of Mecca's authority; the *sharīf* kept a garrison

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[10] *EI*[2], s.v. "Basūs," by J.W. Fūck; s.v. "Kulayb b. Rabīʿa," by G. Levi Della Vida. I am grateful to Adil Sulayman and Irfan Shahid for drawing my attention to this connection.

[11] C. van Arendonk, *Les Debuts de l'imāmat Zaidite au Yemen*, trans. J. Ryckmans, *Publications de la Fondation de Goeje*, No. 18 (Leiden, 1960), pp. 135, 188–189; *EI*[1], s.v. "Hadramawt," by J. Schleifer; R.B. Serjeant, "The Coastal Population of Socotra," in B. Doe, *Socotra: Island of Tranquility* (London, 1992), 163; idem., *The South Arabian Hunt* (London, 1976), 41.

[12] A.S. Tritton asserts that "white is the Zaydi color." See *The Rise of the Imams of Sanaa* (London, 1925; repr., Westport, CT, 1981), 125. Although based in Yemen, the Zaydi *imām*s, as descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, would have been Qaysī.

[13] Robert L. Playfair, *A History of Arabia Felix or Yemen* (Amsterdam, 1970; repr. of 1859 Bombay ed.), 47.

[14] ʿAbdallah Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Wāti b. Baṭūṭa, *Riḥla Ibn Baṭūṭa*, intro. by Karam al-Bustani (Beirut 1964), 246.

there.[15] The Banū Ḥarām were apparently established in Egypt before the Ottoman conquest. The early sixteenth-century chronicler Ibn Iyās notes their presence during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in the Lower Egyptian subprovince of Sharqiyya, where they entertained a hostile rivalry with the Banū Wā'il.[16] The Turkish chronicler Yūsuf Efendi depicts the Banū Ḥarām abandoning the last Mamluk sultan, Tūmānbāy, in the face of the Ottoman armies.[17] Under Ottoman rule, the first significant manifestation of the Ḥarām were the Banū Baqqār, who maintained a stronghold in Upper Egypt from the mid-sixteenth century through at least the early eighteenth century.[18]

The Sa'd bedouin, like the Ḥarām, were present in Sharqiyya subprovince during the late fifteenth century.[19] They seem also to have been well-established in Yemen; various surveys of tribes in Yemen and Hadramawt suggest that they were a Qaysī tribal group with a large presence in the region of Sa'da and in Hadramawt.[20]

If, then, the Ḥarām and Sa'd had Yemeni roots, how might they have come from Yemen to Egypt? There are, of course, numerous possibilities; Red Sea commerce and the pilgrimage, for example, must have offered a fairly regular channel for population movement. It is worth noting, however, that Yemen was in a state of flux just before the Ottoman conquest. The Mamluk sultanate wrested Yemen from the Arab Ṭāhirid dynasty only in 1507, as a sort of afterthought after launching an expedition against the Portuguese along the Indian coast.[21] Numerous Yemeni chronicles report that the "Zayyidiyya"—that is, Zaydi tribesmen—joined the "Circassian"

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[15] C. Niebuhr, *Travels through Arabia and Other Countries in the East*, trans. Robert Heron, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1792; reprint Beirut), i, 242–243; al-Baḥkalī, *Quintessence de l'or*, 143, n. 207.

[16] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Iyās (1448–c. 1524), *Histoire des Mamlouks circassiens*, trans. Gaston Wiet, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1945), i, 68, 77, 78, 117, 405; idem., *Journal d'un bourgeois du Caire*, trans. Gaston Wiet, 2 vols. (Paris, 1955), i, 51, 304.

[17] Yūsuf Efendi, *Tārīh-i Miṣır*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Esad Efendi 2148, fo. 43v.

[18] Anonymous, *Tevārih-i Miṣır-ī Kāhire*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Haci Mahmud Efendi 4877, fo. 12v; Aḥmad Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ*, 395–396.

[19] Ibn Iyās, *Histoire des Mamlouks circassiens*, ii, 65, 68.

[20] For example, Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, vol. i (London, 1966); Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980); J.R.L. Carter, *Tribes in Oman* (London, 1982).

[21] al-Nahrāwalī, *Al-Barq al-yamānī*, 19ff.

conquerors.[22] Some 200 years later, a group labelled Zayyidiyya appears in the chronicle of al-Damūrdāshī. Describing the convoluted exploits of Çerkes Mehmed Bey, a grandee of Egypt's Qāsimī faction, in the 1720s, the chronicler notes that Çerkes Bey was supported by a number of bedouin tribes, including "the Zayyidiyya of the Niṣf Ḥarām," a group active in Lower Egypt, who apparently sought to use this alliance to win control of Giza.[23] It would seem, then, that even if the Zayyidiyya were not themselves Banū Ḥarām, they were at least affiliated with them. This connection between the Ḥarām bedouin and the Zaydi tribal population of the Yemeni interior might lead one to suspect that the Qāsimī faction took its name from the Zaydi Qāsimī dynasty, founded by the *imām* al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad (1597–1620). In 1636, al-Qāsim's son, the *imām* al-Muʿayyad billāh Muḥammad, after years of sporadic fighting and territorial advances, finally expelled the Ottomans from their last stronghold in the southern city of Zabid.[24]

The probable source of the Fiqārīs' name is to be found in the second binary opposition presented in al-Damurdāshī's origin myth: "Ḥusaynī" and "Yazīdī". This opposition clearly alludes to the late seventh-century C.E. conflict between the Umayyad dynasty under Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya and the party loyal to the caliph ʿAlī, led by ʿAlī's son Ḥusayn, who was martyred by Yazīd's army in 680 C.E. This evocation of the struggles of early Islam opens the possibility that the Fiqārī faction took its name from ʿAlī's sword Dhū'l-Fiqār, a highly charged symbol exploited by a variety of groups throughout Islamic history. It is fairly well-known that the Ottoman Janissaries were quite attached to ʿAlī and that their banners commonly bore the image of the double-bladed sword Dhū'l-Fiqār; when Sultan Selim I conquered Egypt, in fact, he carried a large red Dhū'l-Fiqār

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[22] al-Nahrāwalī, *Al-Barq al-yamānī*, 20ff.; Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ghāyat al-amānī*, ii, 645; Ibn al-Dayba', *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*, ii, 225ff.

[23] al-Damūrdāshī, *Durra*, 364–365. See also Aḥmad Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ*, 528. On p. 530, Aḥmad Çelebi quotes one "Ibn al-Dhayb," who is surely Ibn al-Dayba'.

[24] P. Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford, 1989), 198–199; idem., "Writing and Acting History in Upper Yemen," in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley, 1990), 265ff.; R.B. Serjeant, "The Post-Medieval and Modern History of San'ā' and the Yemen, ca. 953–1382/1515–1962," in Serjeant and Ronald Lewcock, edd., *San'ā': An Arabian Islamic City* (London, 1983), 77. On al-Muʿayyad and the Qāsimī defeat of the Ottomans specifically, see Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ghāyat al-amānī*, ii, 815ff.

banner (although some Ottoman Dhū'l-Fiqār banners were white).[25] We also know that the Janissary regiment in Egypt was dominated by the Fiqārī faction during much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and is called "Zülfikarlu ocak," or "Dhū'l-Fiqār's regiment," in an anonymous late seventeenth-century chronicle of Egypt.[26]

Yet there was a competing Yemeni claim to Dhū'l-Fiqār: namely, that of the Zaydi *imām*s. According to Zaydi tradition, the sword Dhū'l-Fiqār had been brought to Yemen by the first Zaydi *imām*, al-Hādī, who migrated to Yemen from Medina at the end of the ninth century C.E.[27] The last *imām* to use Dhū'l-Fiqār in battle was supposedly al-Mahdī Muḥammad b. al-Muṭahhar (r. 1301–1328), who was expelled from Mecca by the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn.[28] The Qāsimī *imām*s who defeated the Ottomans may not have had the sword Dhū'l-Fiqār in their possession, but they did, according to the British traveller Robert Playfair, carry a red banner emblazoned with their own version of the sword Dhū'l-Fiqār.[29] The banners of the Fiqārī and Qāsimī factions may thus have displayed alternative versions of the sword Dhū'l-Fiqār, so that in Ottoman Egypt's factional rivalries, the symbols of Yemeni Zaydi tradition battled those of Janissary ʿAlid tradition.

The implications of these Yemeni connections for the history of the two factions are, admittedly, rather radical. This essay proposes, in essence, that Egypt's Fiqārī and Qāsimī factions were symbolically re-enacting the Ottoman-Zaydi struggle for Yemen. This is not, I would argue, as far-fetched a notion as may at first appear. It is easy to overlook just how wrenching the Ottoman defeat in Yemen was, especially since neither the Ottoman centrist nor the Egyptian chronicles pay it much attention beyond noting the repeated

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[25] Fevzi Kurtoğlu, *Türk Bayrağı ve Ay Yıldız* (Ankara, 1938), 74–77; Riza Nour, "L'Histoire du croissant," *Revue de Turcologie* 1 (1933), 111–117/340–346; Zdzislaw Zygulski, Jr., *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire* (New York, 1992), 46–50.

[26] Hathaway, *Politics of Households*, 70–87; Anonymous, *Tevārih-i Mısır-ı Kāhire*, fo. 110r.

[27] Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History*, 167–168; Fuad Ishaq Khuri, *Imams and Emirs: State, Religion, and Sects in Islam* (London, 1990), 120; van Arendonk, *Debuts de l'imāmat Zaidite*, 221.

[28] R.B. Serjeant, "The Mosques of San'ā': The Yemeni Islamic Setting," in Serjeant and Lewcock, edd., *San'ā'*, 312.

[29] Playfair, *History of Arabia Felix*, 29.

dispatch of Egyptian soldiers to Yemen. In Istanbul's Süleymaniye Library, however, is a manuscript that sheds some light on the Ottoman defeat. It is a Turkish translation of al-Nahrawālī's *Al-Barq al-yamānī*, but, as was common, the translator, one Ḥācī ʿAlī, extended the chronicle to his own time, roughly 1660. He is therefore able to include an extraordinarily stark and critical account of the Ottoman expulsion. He lauds the bravery of certain of the Egyptian commanders while lambasting the cowardice and ineptitude of the Ottoman governor, who ultimately fled to the Hijaz. But above all else, he laments the indifference of the rest of the empire. Time and again, the Egyptian bey who remained after the governor had fled petitioned for reinforcements and supplies from Egypt, but his requests were ignored while his army ran out of ammunition and food. Those who were not killed in battle could choose between dying of starvation and disease, on the one hand, and deserting to the Qāsimī *imām*, on the other. The Qāsimīs, meanwhile, poured a seemingly inexhaustible supply of bedouin fighters into their effort.[30] One can imagine that the Yemeni quagmire was burned into the collective psyche of Egypt's late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century military cadres, as it would be some 330 years later.

This is not to imply that the Yemeni imbroglio suffices to explain the origins of the Fiqārī and Qāsimī factions. Many other factors were at work, not least the shifting ethnic composition of Egypt's military-administrative elite, and their patronage networks.[31] Nor should it to be assumed that the factions of al-Damurdāshī's time were fully aware that the heraldic devices they deployed evoked the struggle for Yemen. On the contrary, collective memory among Egypt's military-administrative elite was, from the evidence of the chronicles, highly changeable. By the early eighteenth century, moreover, the factional symbolism had clearly acquired a life of its own. Thus, when al-Jabartī, recalling in the early nineteenth century his hazy childhood memories, notes that "we could tell [the Fiqārīs and Qāsimīs] apart because when they rode in procession, the Fiqārīs carried a red flag, and their standard had a knob, while the Qāsimīs

[30] Ḥācī ʿAlī, *Aḫbār ul-yamānī*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, MS Hamidiye 886, fos. 209v ff.

[31] Hathaway, *The Politics of Households*, 11–12; idem., "Egypt in the Seventeenth Century," in Martin Daly, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ii (Cambridge, 1998), 37–42.

carried a white flag, and their standard had a disk,"[32] one gets the impression that this was one of the few ways left of telling the two factions apart, or even remembering which was which.

These origin myths, in fact, present a phenomenon not unlike that of the fifteenth-century chroniclers of the origins of the Ottoman state, notably Aşıkpaşazade. These chroniclers sought to enshrine an idealized ghāzī culture just when the ghāzī ethos of the early Ottomans was being eclipsed by an urbane court culture.[33] Similarly, the origin myths of the Fiqārīs and Qāsimīs are presented, if not invented, by eighteenth-century chroniclers writing as the factions limped toward desuetude, for an agenda specific to their own times. As Hugh Trevor-Roper demonstrates in his contribution to *The Invention of Tradition*, wherein he documents the invention of the Highland tartan by a nineteenth-century British industrialist, such a practice was by no means uncommon.[34] A sort of canonical nostalgia certainly plays a role in the Egyptian chronicles; both Aḥmad Çelebi and al-Damurdāshī frame their histories as "lore of the olden days," when larger-than-life beys, aghas, and kâhyas fought great battles and engaged in intricate intrigues.[35] There is, in all likelihood, some attempt to recapture a fast-fading memory of what the factions represented and how they represented themselves.

A corollary of the theory that the historiography of Ottoman Egypt reflects the localism of the chroniclers on whom historians rely is that historians may be reluctant to supply the regional context because the chroniclers do not typically supply it. Efforts to understand these two factions have likewise been hampered by an eagerness within the Ottoman Egyptian subfield to interpret them as an atavistic manifestation of the factionalism that plagued the Mamluk sultanate, rather than as a distinctive form of *bipolar* factionalism.[36] The histo-

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[32] Al-Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib al-athār*, i, 71.

[33] Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography;" and V.L. Ménage, "The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography," in Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, Historical Writings of the Peoples of Asia, No. 4 (Oxford, 1962); Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1995), 98ff.

[34] Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).

[35] Aḥmad Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ*, 95; al-Damūrdāshī, *Durra*, 1.

[36] See, for example, Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London and New York, 1992), 50–52; P.M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent: A*

riography of Ottoman Egypt has reached a point, I believe, at which historians can reconstruct the profound links between Egypt and Yemen by plumbing a wide variety of sources from both sides, as well as from the Hijaz and the Ottoman capital, and cross-checking these sources for common usages that are more than coincidental. This entails a certain amount of risk, especially when one is operating at the level of myth and symbol. Yet the connections between Egypt and Yemen were real. This is plain enough from the many exchanges of governors between the provinces and dispatches of troops from one province to another. Moreover, archival documents reveal the commercial and fiscal transactions that bound Egypt and Yemen during and after the period of Ottoman rule. Yemen was an integral part of Ottoman Egypt's experience. Historians must therefore treat it as such.

Political History, 1516–1922 (Ithaca and London, 1966), 85–88; Daniel Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt: A Study of the Regimes of ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, 1760–1775* (Minneapolis and Chicago, 1981), 25–26, 30.

AL-JABARTĪ'S *ʿAJĀ'IB AL-ATHĀR FĪ'L-TARĀJIM WA'L-AKHBĀR* AND THE ARABIC HISTORIES OF OTTOMAN EGYPT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Daniel Crecelius

Introduction

It was an indication of the state of our discipline forty years ago that the Ottoman period of Egyptian history (1517–1798) was considered a "dark age," a period of economic, social and political decline, characterized moreover by intellectual and moral decay. The perceived wisdom of the period held that virtually no historian of importance had practiced his art between the death of Ibn Iyās, whose *Badāʾiʿ al-Ẓuhūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Duhūr* ends in 1522,[1] and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan al-Jabartī's *ʿAjāʾib al-Athār fī'l-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār*, which was composed following the French occupation of 1798–1801.[2] It was felt that in some way the Ottoman conquest had led to a decline in the writing of history in Egypt, for no histories of the next three centuries appeared to rival the superb compositions of the historians of the classical mamluk period (1250–1517). The appearance of al-Jabartī's *ʿAjāʾib al-Athār fī'l-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār* was seen to mark a rebirth of the historian's craft in Ottoman Egypt. This composition was so remarkable in conception, style, content and utility that it obscured the works of virtually all his Egyptian predecessors during the period of Ottoman rule. It was as if al-Jabartī, who was considered a worthy successor to the outstanding historians of the classical mamluk period, was responsible for the rebirth of historical writing in Egypt.

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[1] A partial translation was made by W.H. Salmon, *An Account of the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in the Year A.H. 922 (A.D. 1516)* (London, 1921) and a complete translation by Gaston Wiet, *Journal d'un bourgeois du Caire*, ii (Paris, 1960). Sultan Selim's conquest is also described in ʿAli ibn Muḥammad al-Lakhmī al-Ishbīlī al-Maghribī al-Dimashqī, *al-Durr al-Musan fi Sīrat al-Muzaffar Salīm Khān*, ed. H. Ernst (Cairo, 1962).

[2] See *ʿAja'ib al-Athār fi'l al-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār*, four volumes (Cairo: Bulaq Press, 1297 AH/1879–80 AD). Al-Jabarti actually composed three works. See S. Moreh,

Studies published by David Ayalon in the nineteen fifties and sixties on the mamluk system in seventeenth and eighteenth century Egypt provided a solid foundation for students of Ottoman Egypt. Unable to consult the Egyptian archives, which were just being made available to scholars of that period, Ayalon based his research on a careful reading of al-Jabartī's major work. Ayalon's estimation of al-Jabartī's contribution and of the value of his work helped to obscure the contributions of lesser-known (or forgotten) historians of the period between Ibn Iyās and al-Jabartī, for he declared that, "Of the local historians of Ottoman Egypt, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī stands out as a giant among dwarfs. . . . In my opinion, al-Jabartī should be considered one of the greatest historians of the Muslim world of all times, and by far the greatest historian of the Arab world in modern times."[3]

Ayalon assigned a higher value to al-Jabartī's work than to the famous histories, such as those of al-Maqrīzī or al-Sakhāwī, of the classical mamluk period. "Yet I do not think," he wrote, "that any single Mamluk source is so rich, so concise, and so self-contained as al-Jabartī's chronicle in its four volumes of 1,372 pages."[4] Ayalon therefore skips directly from the period of the mamluk sultanate (1250–1517) to al-Jabartī, passing over in virtual silence a long list of historians of the intervening centuries. He erroneously claimed that

> . . . out of all the chroniclers of Ottoman Egypt, al-Jabartī was the only one who included biographies in his historical work. In the Mamluk sultanate there developed an extremely rich biographical literature, unparalleled perhaps in any other Muslim country or region. This kind of historical writing died out completely in Egypt under the Ottomans until it was revived by al-Jabartī alone, as a result of Syrian influence.[5]

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ed. and transl., *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt* (Leiden, 1975); Muhammad Mahmud al-Suruji, "ʿAja'ib al-Athar wa Mazhar al-Taqdis," in Ahmad ʿIzzat ʿAbd al-Karim, ed., *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī: Dirasat wa Buhuth* (Cairo, 1974); *Ta'rikh Muddat al-Faransis bi Misr* (1798); *Mazhar al-Taqdis bi Zawal Dawlat al-Faransis* (1801). Yet another published manuscript from the period of the French occupation is Niqula al-Turk, *Mudhakirat Niqula al-Turk*, ed. and trans. as *Chronique d'Egypte (1798–1804)*, by Gaston Wiet (Cairo, 1950).

[3] D. Ayalon, "The Historian al-Jabartī and his Background," *BSOAS* XXIII (1960), 218.

[4] Ayalon, "al-Jabartī", 233.

[5] Ayalon, "al-Jabartī", 224–225. I shall return to this point later.

Al-Jabartī himself claimed that a paucity of sources for the Ottoman centuries forced him to employ his own methodologies. He explained,

> When I decided to gather together my notes, I desired to link them to preceding events. I searched and investigated, but could find nothing except a few booklets written by some common soldiers. These were poorly expressed and confused in composition and order. They were marred with defects in places in the narration of events. However, I succeeded in obtaining one such history written on the whole in a simple and natural style by a person named Aḥmad Shalabī b. 'Abd al-Ghānī. It begins with the capture of Egypt by the Ottomans, and ends, like the others which I have mentioned, in 1150 (1737). Then a certain friend borrowed the book and failed to return it; so it is as good as lost. From that date to the present, no one has recorded or written anything of use in the field. I have therefore had recourse to transmitting the words of elderly people, to documents from the registers of clerks and custodians, and to inscriptions on tombstones from the beginning of the (12th *hijri*) century up to the year 1170 (1756). What follows, up to the year 1190 (1776), are events which we ourselves witnessed but partly forgot and partly remembered. From the latter date to the present there are events which we have considered, evaluated and written down, until we achieved our goal, such as it was—namely, to narrate this in an orderly arrangement from our time to that period.[6]

I shall refer to this statement throughout the rest of this paper, for it appears that al-Jabartī was deliberately obscuring the numerous sources from which he actually drew his account of the period 1688–1776, and later. It also does not do justice to the rich array of Arabic manuscript histories of the eighteenth century.

Published Arabic Manuscript Histories of Ottoman Egypt

Two articles, one in Arabic in 1962, the other in English in 1968, revived interest in the range of Arabic manuscripts of the Ottoman period that preceded al-Jabartī's opus. Muḥammad Anis first offered a revealing essay on the range of Egyptian historians active during

[6] This and subsequent references to 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan al-Jabartī are to the recently published English translation. Page references are to the Arabic text, which is clearly marked in the translated edition. See *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt*, edited by Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann (Stuttgart, 1994), i, 6.

the Ottoman centuries[7] and in a short article P.M. Holt surveyed the Arabic manuscripts covering the Ottoman centuries.[8] These two articles helped to focus interest on the neglected topic of manuscript sources for the Ottoman period and gave impetus to the continuing flow of published manuscripts by, generally, the next generation of scholars.[9] Among the Arabic manuscripts from the Ottoman centuries published in the last 30 years are:

ʿAlī al-Shādhilī, *Nubdha fī dhikr ma waqaʿa bayn umarāʾ Miṣr sanat 1123*, edition and commentary by ʿAbd al-Qadir A. Tumaylat, "Dhikr ma waqaʿa ʿaskar al-Maḥrūsa al-Qāhira, *al-Majalla al-Taʾrikhiyya al-Misriyya* 14 (1968), 321–403.

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Abīʾl-Surūr al-Bakrī, *Kashf al-Kurba fī Rafʿ al-Ṭulāb*," edited and annotated by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *al-Majalla al-Taʿrikhiyya al-Miṣriyya* 23 (1976).

Muḥammad al-Burullusī al-Saʿadī, "Bulūgh al-Arab bi Rafʿ al-Ṭulāb," edited and annotated by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *al-Majalla al-Taʿrikhiyya al-Miṣriyya* 24 (1977).

Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī, *Awḍaḥ al-Ishārāt fī man tawallā Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-Wuzarāʾ waʾl-Bāshāt*, edited and annotated by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (Cairo, 1978).

Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Rashīdī, *al-Ṣafāʾ waʾl-Ibtihāj bi Dhikr Wālī Imārat al-Ḥajj*, edited and annotated by Layla ʿAbd al-Latīf Aḥmad (Cairo, 1980).

ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Anṣārī, *al-Ḥajj wa Ṭarīq Makka al-Mukarrama*, edited and annotated by Aḥmad al-Qasir (Riyadh, 1403/1983).

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[7] See Muhammad Anis, *Madrasat al-Taʾrikh al-Misri fīʾl-ʿAsr al-ʿUthmānī* (Cairo: 1962).

[8] P.M. Holt, "Ottoman Egypt (1517–1798): an account of Arabic historical sources," in P.M. Holt, ed., *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, (London: 1968), 3–12.

[9] This article focuses on the Arabic manuscripts of the Ottoman period. For a survey of Turkish works, see Stanford J. Shaw, "Turkish Source-materials for Egyptian History," in P.M. Holt, ed., *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, 28–48. In addition to Huseyn Efendi's work of 65 pages, Shaw also edited and translated a short, but useful, manuscript in Turkish from the second half of the eighteenth century. See *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century: The Nizamname-i Misir of Cezzar Ahmed Pasha* (Cambridge: 1962). Jane Hathaway has provided a stimulating discussion of the interplay of Arabic and Turkish historians and their manuscripts in "Sultans, Pashas, *Taqwims*, and *Mühimmes*: A Reconsideration of Chronicle-Writing in Eighteenth Century Ottoman Egypt," in D. Crecelius, ed., *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources* (Claremont, 1990), 51–78.

Ibrāhīm b. Abī Bakr al-Sawāliḥī al-Ḥanbalī al-'Ufi, *Tarājim al-Sawa'iq fi Waqī'at al-Sanājiq*, edited and annotated by 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Raḥīm (Cairo, 1986).

al-Amīr Aḥmad Katkhuda 'Azabān al-Damurdāshī, *Kītab al-Durra al-Muṣāna fi Akhbār al-Kīnāna*, edited and annotated by 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Raḥīm (Cairo, 1989). This text was also edited and annotated by 'Abd al-Wahhāb Bakr and Daniel Crecelius, *Makhṭūṭāt al-Durra al-Muṣāna fi Akhbār al-Kināna* (Cairo, 1412/1992). See also their annotated English translation, *Al-Damūrdāshī's Chronicle of Egypt: 1688–1755* (Leiden, 1991).

Huseyn Efendi, untitled, edited and translated by Stanford J. Shaw as *Ottoman Egypt in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1964).

Ismā'īl al-Khashshāb, *Tadhkīra li Ahl al-Basā'ir wa'l-Abṣār ma' Wajh al-Ikhtiṣār*, edited by 'Abd al-'Aziz Jamal al-Din and 'Imad Abu Ghazzi, *Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Thani 'Ashar* (Cairo, 1990).

Ismā'īl al-Khashshāb, *Khulāṣāt ma yurad min Akhbār al-Amīr Murād*, edited in Arabic and translated into English by Hamza 'Abd al-'Aziz Badr and Daniel Crecelius, *A Short Manuscript History of the Mamluk Amir Murad Bey* (Cairo, 1992).

Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Rajabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Wazīr Muḥammad 'Alī Bāshā*, edited and annotated by Daniel Crecelius, Ḥamza 'Abd al-'Azīz Badr, and Ḥusam al-Dīn Ismā'īl (Cairo, 1417/1997).[10]

Sources for 'Ajā'ib al-Athār *from the Beginning of the Twelfth Hijri Century to the Rise of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha (1688–1808)*

A generation ago al-Jabartī's *'Ajā'ib al-Athār* was virtually the only source consulted for the period 1688 through the early career of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha; many considered his work a primary source for the entire period despite the fact that he was only born in 1753 and admits in the quotation cited above that he only began to keep his own notes as of the year 1776. Despite the publication of the numerous manuscripts cited above, there has been little interest in the task of uncovering al-Jabartī's sources for the period 1688–1776,

[10] This work, composed in 1823 and dealing with the early reforms of Muḥammad 'Ali Pasha, contains a chapter on the end of the factions of Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey and the suppression of the mamluks in 1811.

which takes up the entire first volume of 420 pages, or in the exploration of the interrelationships among this group of manuscripts. In his survey of Arabic sources cited above, Holt raised, but did not develop the issue of al-Jabartī's borrowings. He warned that

> . . . the first volume is of uneven value. Down to the middle of the eighteenth century, [al-Jabartī] combines (although he does not fully synthesize) sources of varying quality. Only from 1170/1756–57 onwards, after the end of the Damūrdāshī group, does his chronicle acquire independent evidential value: before that date, recourse should be had to the older sources.[11]

Yet in a well-known Cairo conference of 1974 which was devoted to a review of the work and reputation of al-Jabartī, only one of thirty-six contributions addressed the question of al-Jabartī's borrowings from earlier sources. To the best of my knowledge, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm's presentation at this conference was the first serious attempt to track al-Jabartī's borrowings.[12] ʿAbd al-Raḥīm's contribution was significant for at least two reasons. He publicized one of the two major sources (the other is Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damurdāshī's *al-Durra al-Muṣāna fī Akhbār al-Kīnāna*) for the first half of the eighteenth century and demonstrated al-Jabartī's "massive borrowing" from Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī.

The question of al-Jabartī's use of earlier sources had remained muted until ʿAbd al-Raḥīm exposed the extent of al-Jabartī's reliance on Aḥmad Shalabī, despite al-Jabartī's attempt, cited in the lengthy quotation above, to obscure his debt by noting that someone had borrowed his copy of *Awḍaḥ al-Ishārat* and that this major source was therefore "as good as lost." In another well-known article extolling the value of al-Jabartī's history, David Ayalon cited the manuscript of Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damūrdāshī, remarking that, "This chronicle, in spite of its poor style and bad structure, is a mine of accurate information."[13] While Ayalon noticed some obvious similarities between al-Jabartī's *ʿAjā'ib al-Athār* and al-Damurdāshī's *al-*

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[11] Holt, "An Account of Arabic Historical Sources," 10.

[12] See ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, "'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti wa Ahmad Shalabi ibn ʿAbd al-Ghani: Dirasa Muqarana," in Ahmad ʿIzzat ʿAbd al-Karim, ed., *al-Ǧabarti*, 183–208.

[13] D. Ayalon, "The Historian al-Jabartī," in Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1962), 396–397.

Durra al-Muṣāna he missed the point of the dependence by the former on the latter and remarked only that al-Damurdāshī's manuscript corroborates the accuracy of al-Jabartī's chronicle. He wrote that, "Al-Jabartī's narrative is entirely upheld in its essence by that of al-Dimurdashi. The last-named only adds numerous details and facts, some of which are extremely important, to the concise story of al-Jabartī."[14] Ayalon even went so far as to contend that "It is very doubtful whether al-Jabartī even knew about al-Dimurdashi and Muṣṭafā b. Ibrāhīm (a contemporary of al-Damurdāshī), the historians who died in the period covered by his chronicle."[15] On the contrary, al-Jabartī knew full well of this set of "military manuscripts" and borrowed heavily from them without attribution.

Several articles have been published in the last few years which demonstrate al-Jabartī's reliance on earlier sources.[16] The remainder of this paper will synopsize the results of these studies and add a number of other sources from the late eighteenth century to the known list of works which were available to al-Jabartī.

A second conference which examined the eighteenth century Arabic manuscript sources for Ottoman Egypt and their relation to al-Jabartī's famous history was held at California State University, Los Angeles in 1989. Nine presentations were made which helped to shine new light on the rich array of Arabic and Turkish manuscript sources for the history of Egypt in the eighteenth century.

André Raymond concluded from his careful review of Shaykh 'Alī al-Shādhilī's manuscript (see the list above) on the civil war of 1711 that "Although Jabartī knew of 'Alī al-Shādhilī's text he seldom seems to have used it. When not following Aḥmad Shalabī's text, Jabartī found al-Damūrdāshī's chronicle a greater source of inspiration. The

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[14] *Loc. cit.*

[15] D. Ayalon, "The Historian al-Jabartī and his Background," 220.

[16] In addition to 'Abd al-Rahim's revealing article in *'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ǧabartī*, see also his study, "Yūsuf al-Mallawānī's *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb* and Aḥmad Shalabī ibn 'Abd al-Ghānī's *Awḍāḥ al-Ishārāt*," in D. Crecelius, ed., *The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 39–50; D. Crecelius, "A Source for al-Jabarti's History," *Newsletter of the American Research Center in Egypt* (Spring, 1989), 7–9; Crecelius, "Masadir Ta'rikh al-Jabarti fi Awakir al-Qarn al-Sabi' 'Ashar wa Awa'il al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashar," *al-Majalla al-Ta'rikhiyya al-Maghribiyya*, 57–58 (July, 1990), 455–462; "Aḥmad Shalabī ibn 'Abd al-Ghani and Ahmad Katkhuda 'Azaban al-Damurdashi: Two Sources for al-Jabarti's *'Aja'ib al-Athār fi'l al-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār*," in Crecelius, ed., *The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 89–102.

Dhikr, which disappeared for about two centuries, is a totally isolated element in Egyptian historiography of the eighteenth century."[17]

In his review of the histories of Yūsuf al-Mallawānī and Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm asserted that,

> I would contend that the viewpoint of the Egyptian historians of the Ottoman centuries towards history was scientific, little different from the viewpoints of Ibn Iyās and al-Jabartī. They felt that history is the standard by which to judge events, discover falsifications, determine victors and identify the vanquished. They also thought that history teaches important lessons, offers advice, and benefits those who are clever enough to learn from history. They did not simply cite the events, but sought out the facts, investigated the events about which they wrote to ascertain the truth, and recorded their findings as best they could. Both Yūsuf al-Mallawānī and Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī fit this pattern and produced important chronicles of the Ottoman centuries that cannot be ignored.[18]

The history of Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī and the massive borrowing al-Jabartī made from this work are well known through the publications of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm and his often consulted edition of *Awḍaḥ al-Ishārāt*. Al-Mallawānī's work, which ʿAbd al-Raḥīm has been editing for publication for some years, is less well known, but equally important. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm stated that,

> Al-Mallawānī is noted for his scholarly honesty, for he mentions the sources upon which he relied for his review of each historical period. . . . The Mallawānī chronicle is an extremely important source for the political, social and cultural history of Egypt in the Ottoman period. Al-Jabartī relied on it and took parts of his reconstruction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from it.[19]

He notes, though, that al-Jabartī "does not always quote al-Mallawānī *in toto*, but edits his text." He offers examples of this borrowing.[20]

In the quotation cited above, al-Jabartī states that the Damūrdāshī group of manuscripts ends in 1150/1737, which might suggest which of the group of manuscripts he consulted, for the manuscript attrib-

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[17] A. Raymond, "The Opuscule of Shaykh ʿAlī al-Shādhilī: A Source for the History of the 1711 Crisis in Cairo," in Crecelius, ed., *The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 38.

[18] ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, "Yūsuf al-Mallawānī's *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb* and Aḥmad Shalabī ibn ʿAbd al-Ghānī's *Awḍāḥ al-Ishārāt*," in Crecelius, ed., *The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 40.

[19] Crecelius, ed., *Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 44–45.

[20] Crecelius, ed., *Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 45.

uted to Ibrāhīm b. Muṣṭafa b. Ibrāhīm, the retainer of the deceased Ḥasan Agha ʿAzabān Damurdāshī, entitled *Waqāʾiʿ Miṣr al-Qāhira*, is the only one of the Damurdāshī group that ends in 1150/1737. The more important manuscript by Muṣṭafa b. Ibrāhīm al-Maddāḥ al-Qīnalī ends in 1739 and was certainly used by al-Jabartī.[21] But it is evident that al-Jabartī borrowed heavily from the version attributed to Aḥmad Katkhuda ʿAzabān al-Damurdāshī. Indeed, for his survey of the period 1688–1756, after his reliance on Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī, al-Jabartī relied most heavily on Aḥmad Katkhuda's *al-Durra al-Muṣāna fi Akhbār al-Kīnāna*.[22]

Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damurdāshī's chronicle ends in 1755–56. Al-Jabartī was born in 1753 and, by his own account, started keeping his own notes in 1776, which would suggest that there is still a manuscript, or manuscripts, covering the period 1756–1776 which al-Jabartī consulted. This gap is seemingly filled by parts of Shaykh Muṣṭafa b. Muḥammad b. Yūsūf b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qalʿawī's neglected *Taʾrīkh Ṣafwat al-Zamān fī man tawallā ʿalā Miṣr min Amīr wa Sulṭān*.[23]

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[21] See, for instance, M. Doss, "Some Remarks on the Oral Factor in Arabic Linguistics," *Dialectologia Arabica, A Collection of Articles in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Heikki Palva*, (Helsinki, 1995), 54–59, 53. Doss, 56, asserts that al-Qīnalī's text was used by al-Jabartī. In comparing al-Qīnalī's text with other versions of the Damūrdāshī group of manuscripts, she writes that "it seems plausible to hypothesize an oral origin for the chronicles mentioned. Very much in the same manner as for written texts traced back to an oral transmission, the series of chronicles considered share the same content, while varying in form. . . . The content of the chronicle may well have constituted an interesting topic for the soldiers of that period who enjoyed listening to stories involving their kin and masters. Only later did the need appear to have these stories recorded for posterity." Of the Qīnalī manuscript, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Bakr has written, "Because of the rich detail of his account, the unique information he includes, the precision of his dates, and the biographical information he provides, the chronicle by al-Qīnalī must be given special prominence among this group (of Damūrdāshī histories). Unfortunately, Qīnalī's work ends in 1739 and must therefore give precedence of place to the manuscript of Aḥmad Katkhuda, which brings the history of this period down to 1756." See Bakr, "Interrelationships Among the Damūrdāshī Group of Manuscripts," in Crecelius, ed., *Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 87.

[22] D. Crecelius, "Aḥmad Shalabī b. ʿAbd al-Ghānī and Aḥmad Katkhudā ʿAzabān al-Damūrdāshī: Two Sources for al-Jabartī's *ʿAjaʾib al-Athār fi Tarājim waʾl-Akhbar*," in Crecelius, ed., *Arabic Manuscript Sources*, 89–102; Crecelius, "An Agreement between the 'Ulamā' and the Mamluk Amirs in 1795: A Test of the Accuracy of Two Contemporary Chronicles," International Conference on the Economic and Social History of Ottoman Egypt, Cairo, December, 1996, forthcoming.

[23] Dar al-Kutub (Cairo), Manuscript Section, Taʾrikh 51.

Al-Qalʿawī's history, written in 244 pages of 23 lines each, begins with the emergence of Islam, proceeds through the Arab caliphates, briefly mentions the succession of Ottoman sultans, the *wazirs* sent to govern Egypt, and ends abruptly, as if unfinished, in 1223/1808, seven years before his death. Al-Qalʿawī covers the years 1757–1775 on pages 196–209 of his manuscript. It is accepted that al-Jabartī began *ʿAjāʾib al-Athār* around 1807–08, roughly the date that Al-Qalʿawī's manuscript abruptly ends. There are enough similarities between al-Qalʿawī's history and *ʿAjāʾib al-Athār* to suggest that al-Jabartī read and borrowed from al-Qalʿawī's work, but al-Jabartī's account is much fuller than al-Qalʿawī's, which is little more than a calendar of events virtually devoid of connecting narrative. Nevertheless, where al-Qalʿawī provides exact dates for the arrival or dismissal of a governor, al-Jabartī notes similar dates; where al-Qalʿawī is indefinite, stating only that such and such a governor arrived or was dismissed during a particular month, al-Jabartī also only mentions the month without the exact date. It is possible that al-Jabartī constructed a narrative for the period 1756–1775 from the oral testimony of witnesses to the events of those years, a methodology he himself claimed to have used, or he supplemented material borrowed from other sources with oral testimony. There might also still be a forgotten manuscript of these years from which both al-Jabartī and al-Qalʿawī borrowed.

Al-Qalʿawī mentions the deaths of many leading *ʿulamāʾ* and sufis. Most of these are also mentioned, though with fuller accounts, by al-Jabartī.[24] al-Qalʿawī merely notes the arrival or dismissal of the pashas, while al-Jabartī frequently offers a page of information about the personality or activities of some of the governors of this period. While it is entirely possible that al-Jabartī could have relied on the testimony of eye-witnesses to the career of ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr for his narrative of this mamluk's career, his account of that period contains much information found in al-Qalʿawī's brief history of those

[24] See, for instance, the notices of the deaths of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Khāliq b. Wafāʾ, died 1763 (Qalʿawī, 196; Jabartī, i, 165); Shaykh Sulaymān al-Manṣūrī, who became Hanafi mufti in 1755–56 (Qalʿawī, 197; Jabartī, i, 148, 187, 190, 211, 312, 408, 411; ii, 84, 246, 263); Shaykh al-Azhar ʿAbd Allāh al-Shubrāwī, died in 1758 (Qalʿawī, 198; Jabartī, i, 341); Shaykh Muḥammad b. Sālim al-Ḥifnawī (Qalʿawī, 198; Jabartī, i, 289–304); Ustādh Sayyid Aḥmad al-Saḥīmī, died in 1764 (Qalʿawī, 200; Jabartī, i, 264); and Shaykh ʿĪsā al-Barāwī al-Shāfiʿī, died 1768 (Qalʿawī, 204; Jabartī, i, 312).

years.[25] Al-Qal'awī, after all, was a mature observer during 'Alī Bey's years while al-Jabartī was still a youth. It almost seems that al-Qal'awī provided the highlights for al-Jabartī's rendition of events, but this is natural since al-Qal'awī follows a strict chronology and mentions only the barest of highlights from each year or from each pasha's governorship.

For instance, al-Qal'awī notes the arrival of an order from Istanbul demanding 3,000 troops and the appointment of Sulaymān Bey al-Shābūrī as head of this contingent, which departed 28 Sha'ban 1182/7 January 1769. Al-Jabartī reports the same facts, but adds a good deal of information on 'Alī Bey's activities in the period between the arrival of the imperial order and the departure of the contingent.[26]

Al-Qal'awī mentions only briefly the events surrounding Ghāzī Ḥasan Pasha's expedition and the tyrannical rule of Ibrāhīm Bey and Murād Bey. He gives a few more pages to the French occupation and the rise of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, but his history comes to an abrupt end in 1223/1808. Al-Qal'awī's death on 26 Ramadan 1230/1 November, 1815 was noted by al-Jabartī, who provided a list of his writings on *fiqh* and poetry.[27] But al-Jabartī fails to mention al-Qal'awī's *Tarīkh Ṣafwat al-Zamān.* This is characteristic of al-Jabartī, who purposely omits references to those sources which he consulted for his own chronicle.

One of al-Jabartī's best personal friends died 5 November, 1815, only four days after al-Qal'awī passed away. Sayyid Ismā'īl

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[25] For his coverage of the period 1757–1768 al-Jabarti writes, "The preceding is a summary of the events of these years. Further detail is impossible owing to the passage of time and unreliability of memories." *'Aja'ib al-Athār*, i, 429.

[26] Al-Qal'awī, 205; al-Jabartī, i, 308–309. Another example would be al-Qal'awī's mere mention of the Qarib Shiha plague which struck in the year 1172/1758–59 on the heels of a torrential rain which destroyed many buildings. Al-Jabartī notes that this plague, which came after great rains in 1171/1757–58, was particularly severe and carried away countless people. It reached its height in March and April 1758 then abated later in 1758. See al-Qal'awī, 198; al-Jabartī, i, 250. One might give some consideration to the possibility that al-Qal'awī, who was withdrawn but known to al-Jabartī, somehow abstracted his information from al-Jabartī's manuscript. For instance, al-Qal'awī, page 209, reports that in the year 1190/1776 a group of Indians appeared with a small elephant. Al-Jabartī (ii, 3) also reports the arrival of Indians with a small elephant, but adds that this elephant "would go down on his knees and salute with his trunk." One is tempted to assume that both authors witnessed the elephant's performance but that al-Jabartī, as usual, gives a fuller account.

[27] Al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-Athār*, iv, 237–238.

al-Khashshāb, for whom al-Jabartī provides a lengthy and flattering obituary, was appointed secretary to one of the French bureaux during their occupation and was asked by the French to produce some writings on the history of Egypt in the eighteenth century. Al-Khashshāb's two short and modest histories were surely known to al-Jabartī, but were not included in his tribute to his close friend.[28] Nevertheless, one finds some points of convergence in their respective works. In 1795 a major crisis in Cairo was sparked by Muḥammad Bey al-Alfī's excessive demands for taxes from the inhabitants of a village in Sharqiyya province in which Shaykh al-Azhar ʿAbdallāh al-Sharqāwī held an *iltizām* (tax farm). Al-Sharqāwī, the other high *ʿulamāʾ*, the governor and representatives of the Ottoman garrison held three days of negotiations with Ibrahim Bey that ended in a signed agreement of 14 points that sought to satisfy the complaints of the *ʿulamāʾ* and the general populace against the tyrannies of the amirs. This agreement was countersigned by Murad Bey and recorded in the Bāb al-ʿĀlī court.[29]

Both al-Jabartī and al-Khashshāb report this important incident. Both refer to the signed agreement but reveal only half of its 14 provisions. This is particularly characteristic of al-Jabartī's methodology. When he consulted lengthy state documents, such as firmans or *waqfiyyāt*, he frequently synopsized them or reported only half of their contents.[30] In this case both historians provide necessary background information to place the crisis of 1795 and the agreement between the amirs and the *ʿulamāʾ* in perspective.

The two accounts of this crisis and its resolution are very close, but in general al-Jabartī's account is more coherent and informative. Al-Khashshāb does not even note the year in which the crisis or the agreement took place. The two histories of al-Khashshāb are certainly no rivals to ʿAjāʾib al-Athār, but al-Jabartī does not mentioned these works, no matter how modest they are, and despite their composition by one of his closest friends. Al-Jabartī was a proud

[28] *Tadhkira li Ahl al-Baṣāʾir wa al-Abṣār maʿ Wajh al-Ikhtiṣār* and *Khulāṣat ma yurad min Akhbār al-Amīr Murād* have both been published. See the list of published manuscript histories of Ottoman Egypt above.

[29] See Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), al-Bab al-ʿAli series, 3 *Sijill* 18, *Madda* 1, page 1 (27 Dhu al-Hijja 1209).

[30] I have noticed that in borrowing poetry from earlier sources al-Jabartī often copied only half a lengthy text.

and jealous man who did not seem capable of acknowledging the writings of those he viewed as rivals.

To date, efforts to expose the sources that al-Jabartī used in compiling his justly famous work have concentrated on the narrative histories of the twelfth century *hijra*. Little research has gone into discovering the sources for his extensive biographies, particularly those of *ʿulamāʾ*, sufis, *ashrāf* and saints. In reading Shaykh al-Azhar ʿAbdallah al-Sharqāwī's *al-Tuḥfa al-Bāhiyya fi Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya*[31] one finds close similarities with al-Jabartī's biographies of the late eighteenth century. Al-Jabartī did not like al-Sharqāwī and wrote a lengthy, sarcastic biography of this shaykh in which he remarked that

> The shaykh compiled the biographies of some of the ancient and modern Shafiʿi jurists, both of his time and from the 12th century. He took the biographies of the older ones from the works of (ʿAbd al-Wahhāb) al-Subkī and al-Isnāwī. As for the moderns, he took theirs' word for word from my work. I think that was the last thing he wrote. Before that he had written a short history in four notebooks on the arrival of the vizier Yūsuf Pasha in Egypt, and the departure of the French, which he dedicated to Yūsuf Pasha. In it he enumerated the kings of Egypt and at the end made mention of the French departure and the coming of the Ottomans in about two pages. It is extremely dry, and he made many mistakes, among which he said that the Honorable Shaʿban, the son of the amir Ḥusayn b. al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, was the son of the Sultan Ḥasan, etc.[32]

The fact that there is so much borrowing among authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries indicates that our historians had access to a wide range of manuscript histories, *ṭabaqāt* collections, and other relevant sources.

Conclusions

Far from being a period of literary stagnation, the years of Ottoman domination formed an era of lively scholarly production during which numerous writers, whether scholars such as Aḥmad Shalabī or ʿAlī

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[31] Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Sharqāwī (d. 1812), *al-Tuḥfa al-Bāhiyya fi Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya*, of 240 pages, lists biographies of Shāfiʿi scholars to 1221/1806–07. A copy is preserved as Taʾrikh 578 in the manuscript section of Cairo's Dar al-Kutub.

[32] Al-Jabartī, *ʿAjaʾib al-Athār*, iv, 163. Shaykh al-Sharqāwī's history is so weak as to hardly deserve mention. See *Tuḥfat al-Nāẓirīn fi man waliya Miṣr min al-Wulāt wa*

al-Shādhilī, or literate representatives of the military caste such as the Damūrdāshī authors, composed useful histories. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are well represented by a number of excellent works. The first half of the eighteenth century in particular is covered by a surprising number of good to excellent histories, such as those of al-Mallawānī and al-Qīnalī, ʿAlī al-Shādhilī, Aḥmad Shalabī and Aḥmad Katkhuda ʿAzabān al-Damurdāshī. In comparing *ʿAjā'ib al-Athār* with the writings of the remainder of the eighteenth century historians one can indeed agree with Ayalon that writers of the period, such as al-Qalʿawī, al-Khashshāb, and al-Sharqāwī, are dwarfs. Their histories are short on narrative, often inaccurate, and of very limited use.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the manuscripts cited above were available to an interested reader.[33] Virtually all of them were known and/or used, though without attribution, by al-Jabartī. Whatever praise has been given to al-Jabartī for his history of the twelfth century *hijra* should rightfully be directed to the authors who covered the years before al-Jabartī was born (1753) or before he started collecting his own notes (1776). Moreover, now that most of those earlier histories have been edited and published, it is time for scholars to refer to these sources directly, rather than to al-Jabartī. This is not to detract from al-Jabartī's own unique contribution for the period following the deaths of ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr (1773) and Muḥammad Bey Abū'l-Dhahab (1775). *ʿAjā'ib al-Athār* and his other two writings are remarkable and well deserve the attention and praise they have received by generations of scholars, but the authors of the earlier period should also be given their due. Future research on the earlier period might focus on how much crossover there is between *Awḍaḥ al-Isharat* and *al-Durra al-Muṣāna*, or how much each author borrowed from manuscripts of the seventeenth century.[34]

Given al-Jabartī's claim that al-Sharqāwī lifted his biographies of recently deceased *ʿulamā'* from his own work, it would also be use-

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al-Salaṭīn, printed in the margin of Muḥammad al-Isḥāqī al-Manūfī's *Kītāb akhbār al-uwal fi man tasarrafa fī Misr min Arbāb al-Duwal* Cairo, 1311).

[33] Aḥmad Katkhuda ʿAzabān al-Damūrdāshī's *al-Durra al-Muṣāna*, for instance, was copied at ʿAli Bey's mosque in Tanta in Safar 1215/June-July 1800.

[34] Hathaway (ft. 9) has also made a case for exploring the interplay between Arabic and Turkish sources of the period.

ful for future research to focus on the *ṭabaqāt* sources and to lay out the interrelationships among this group of works to expose the connections between the *ṭabaqāt* compositions and the manuscript histories that include biographies of deceased scholars, saints and *ashrāf*.

THE CHRONICLES OF OTTOMAN EGYPT: HISTORY OR ENTERTAINMENT?

Nelly Hanna

Ottoman chronicles and histories have usually been evaluated by an implicit or explicit comparison to the histories of Mamluk Egypt, a period of great production in historical writing. Such comparisons are useful to a certain extent because they allow us to study the way history writing developed. Yet they have their limitations, since the analysis of the written production of a certain period becomes divorced from the social or intellectual environment which produced it. A comparison with historical writing of the Mamluk period alone does not necessarily help us to understand why history was written in a particular way two or three centuries later.

It is this limitation that the present study is addressing. My analysis of Ottoman historiography in Egypt will attempt to provide a link between the type of writing that was produced and the social and cultural conditions that shaped it. Rather than understanding the histories and chronicles of Ottoman Egypt in abstract terms, divorced from their context, the present study proposes to analyze them as the products of a particular society at a specific moment in time. This will lead to a consideration of the social functions of history, of the social groups it addressed and of the way this may have helped to shape the historical production of the period. By understanding the links between historical works and the audiences or readers for whom they were intended, we can provide answers to a number of questions for which no satisfactory explanations have so far been forwarded. We can consequently understand the historical production as an expression of the period, with its accomplishments and its weaknesses, rather than dismissing it, as has sometimes been done, because it is in decline.[1]

The reasons that have sometimes been forwarded to explain this decline, for instance that Egypt was no longer the center of events

[1] D. Ayalon, "The Historian al-Al-Jabarti and his Background," BSOAS, 23, (1960), 219–221.

but merely a province, that morale was low in literate circles, do not fully explain the situation, either in terms of the volume of works produced nor in terms of their content.[2] We have, for instance, a number of indications which show that there was a significant output in the number of historical works written or copied between the 16th and the 18th centuries. We may attribute this to a demand for such works in the market. Unfortunately, we are still not well informed about the exact extent of these histories. A preliminary attempt to identify the historical works of the Ottoman period was made by Peter Holt who came up with a list of some 18 historians.[3] This was the first serious attempt in identifying the historical works of the period. More recently, Daniel Crecelius was able to come up with some 14 histories for the 18th century only, quite a few more than had been known earlier.[4] We nevertheless still have a long way to go in the search for extant historical manuscripts. In the National Library in Cairo, as well as in the major European and Turkish collections of Arabic manuscripts, the search has yet to be systematically undertaken.

The indications are that we can hope to find many more works which have not been either identified or studied. Many of the histories contained in manuscript collections have not been used and are rarely or never even mentioned by scholars of Ottoman Egypt. One also finds historians whose names seem to have fallen into oblivion. Scholars are yet to explore chronicles and histories like *Al-Budūr al-Safīra fī man Waliya al-Qāhira* by Nūr al-Dīn al-Minhājī covering the second half of the 16th century (Vienna Collection of Oriental Manuscripts 918); Nūḥ Efendi's *Ta'rīkh Miṣr* covering early history up to the conquest of Sultan Selim (Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Arabic Manuscripts, Schefer 6063); al-Jawharī's *al-Durr al-Thamīn fī ma warada fī Miṣr wa Aʿmāliha bi'l Khuṣūṣ wa'l ʿUmūm* (Vienna 917, Paris 1812 and 1813); Muḥammad al-Ghazalī's *Kitāb Tuḥfat al-Jalīl fī Akhbār Miṣr wa'l-Nīl*, (Garret Collection of Arabic Manuscripts, Princeton University, 616).These collections also include biographical dictio-

[2] M. Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798*, (London, 1992), 18–19.

[3] P.M. Holt, "Ottoman Egypt: (1517–1798): An Account of Arabic Historical Sources in P.M. Holt, ed., *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, (Oxford, 1968), 6–10.

[4] D. Crecelius, ed., *Eighteenth Century Egypt, the Arabic Manuscript Sources*, (Claremont, California, 1990), 3–4.

naries which have yet to be exploited, like the work of Zain al-Dīn Muḥammad Madyan al-Quṣūnī, also known as al-Ṭabīb, *Al-Rūḥ al-Baṣīr ʿalā baʿḍ Wafayāt Aʿyān al-Qarn al-ʿĀshir*, and ʿAbd al-Karīm Effendi's *Tarājim Kībār al-ʿUlamāʾ wa'l-Wuzarāʾ* (Vienna 1188). The list of historical works produced in the Ottoman period will probably become much longer as more work is done in uncovering unknown manuscripts.

In addition to extant historical manuscripts, we learn from the biographies of al-Jabartī and al-Muḥibbī about persons, often unknown today, who wrote histories, and about historical works which may not be extant. The scholar, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Minawī, well known for his work on *fiqh* and on Sufism, apparently also wrote a history of the Caliphs.[5] Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Shubrāwī, one of the prominent shaykhs of his time, who was chosen for the post of Shaykh al-Azhar in 1725, wrote a work upon the request of ʿAli Pasha entitled *Sharh al-Ṣadr fī Sharḥ Ghazawāt Badr*, at the conclusion of which he wrote a short section on the history of the governors of Egypt up to ʿAli Pasha.[6] Another less well known writer, Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Abūʾl-Maʿālī al-Makkī wrote a poem on the history of Cairo called *al-Ḥujaj al-Qāhira*.[7] al-Jabartī's necrology of al-Qāsim b. ʿAṭāʾ Allāh al-Miṣrī, a well known poet and writer, was also apparently a greatly admired historian in his lifetime.[8] Thus, in addition to the historians whose fame has reached us, there seems to have been a certain number of people, according to these biographies, who wrote history books on an occasional basis, but were not primarily historians.[9] These occasional historians should also be taken into consideration, regardless of the quality of their information or the level of their analysis, if we want to understand the place that history had in society.

We can tell by the number of historical works written in the Ottoman period that there was a demand for this type of writing. This demand partly came from intellectual circles, from educational institutional and from individuals. History books were commonly

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[5] Al-Muhibbi, *Khulasat al-Athar*, (Bulaq, 1867), ii, 416a.

[6] T. Phillip and M. Perlmann, eds., *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt, ʿAjaʾib al-Athār fī'l-Tarajim wa'l-Akhbār*, (Stuttgart, 1994), i, 208–9. (page numbers refer to Bulaq edition).

[7] al-Jabartī, *ʿAjaʾib*, i, 261–2.

[8] al-Jabartī, *ʿAjaʾib*, ii, 184.

[9] For example, al-Jabartī, *ʿAjaʾib*, ii, 263–4.

found in the libraries of mosques and *madrasa*s. The contents of the *waqfiyya* of Muḥammad Abū'l-Dhabab's *madrasa* mentions a large library, containing 1004 books. These books covered some thirty subjects, most of them religious sciences, *tafsīr, ḥadīth* and *fiqh ḥanafī* being the most prominent. The library had 48 history books, a small number in comparison to those on religious subjects, but nevertheless more numerous than many other subjects like Shāfiʿi or Māliki *fiqh* (nine books in each) on *farā'iḍ* (ten books) or on mathematics and algebra (ten books).[10] Many mosques and *madrasa*s in Cairo had libraries, some of them, like that of al-Azhar, very important ones. Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī tells us in the introduction to his monumental lexographical work, *Tāj al-ʿArūs* that he consulted books in the libraries of a number of *madrasa*s, that of emir Azbak, of al-Ashraf Barsbay in al-ʿAnbariyyīn, of Qāytbāy, of Mu'ayyad and of the Maḥmūdiyya.[11]

As Cairo was a major intellectual center of Egypt and of the Islamic world, books written and copied there were diffused to other centers. At the present time, one can only guess how far the libraries of provincial cities in Egypt, like Alexandria, Damietta, or Rashid, Tanta, which had their own educational institutions, were furnished from the book markets of Cairo. We are somewhat better informed as to books written in Cairo found in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The works in the manuscript collection of the Sulimaniyya Mosque of Istanbul, which houses the libraries of a number of major educational institutions of the city as well as private libraries of great personages, indicate that books travelled from one major center to another and the books written in one city found their way to many other cities.

The Sulimaniyya Collection in Istanbul contains numerous histories written in Egypt, by historians of Ottoman Egypt, like Muḥammad b. Abī'l Surūr al-Bakrī,[12] Mariʿī Yūsuf al-Maqdasī,[13] al-Isḥāqī,[14] including lesser-known historians like ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿUmar al-Baghdādī (died 1093/1682).[15] A systematic study of these, which is yet to be

[10] D. Crecelius, "The Waqf of Muhammad Bey Abu Al-Dhahab in Historical Perspective," *IJMES*, 23 (1991), 65–6a.

[11] Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs min Jawahir al-Qamus*, edited by ʿAbd al-Sattar Ahmad Farraj, (Kuwait, 1965), i, 5–7.

[12] For instance Aya Sofia 3345 in the Sulimaniyya Manuscript Collection.

[13] For instance, Laleli 1344, Esad Ef. 1143, 3306, Fatih 5454.

[14] Esad Ef. 2367; ʿAshif Ef. 697.

[15] For example, a work entitled *Maqsad al-maram fi ʿaja'ib al-ahram* (Shehid Ali Pasa

undertaken, could serve two purposes, first to show us which works or writers were the most popular in the Istanbul market and second, to eventually uncover works which we do not know about or identify unknown historians. The Collection also contains a large number of histories of Egypt written in the Mamluk period, al-Maqrīzī being amongst the most popular historians, judging from the number of works or of copies of works.[16] This indicates that the market for historical works written or copied in Cairo extended over a wide region. It would be significant to study libraries in other important centers like Damascus and Aleppo to find out if there was a similar demand in these cities.

Demand for historical writing did not only come from *madrasa*s or mosques. A wide market in fact existed outside the framework of educational institutions, in the private homes of people. This is confirmed by the court records, notably those of the courts of Qisma ʿAskariyya and Qisma ʿArabiyya, where the property of deceased persons was divided amongst their heirs. Often, among the items contained in houses were books, sometimes a few books mentioned in passing and sometimes large libraries with hundreds of volumes. The documents indicate the titles of these books, thereby providing precious information about the books available and about people's tastes.[17] Private ownership of books was not limited the *ʿulama*, class, but went beyond to other social groups. The probate records show that private libraries were found in the houses of emirs, bureaucrats, merchants, as well as shaykhs. Thus across the social spectrum, one can form an idea of the social groups likely to own private libraries and the extent of these libraries in terms of the number of books they contained.

The systematic study of these private libraries is yet to be undertaken. Nevertheless, a close look at a number of private libraries dating from the first half of the 18th century enables us to come up with some general comments on their contents. Although these libraries contained books on many subjects, the subject which dominated was

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2733). He also wrote a biographical work on scholars and poets (Sehid Ali pasa 2836/8).

[16] Numerous copies of the *Khiṭāṭ*, for instance Yeni Cami 902, 903, 904, Fatih 4494, 4495, 4500, 4501, Esad Ef. 2255.

[17] Nelly Hanna, "Cultural Life in Mamluk households (late Ottoman period)," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* eds., T. Philipp and U. Haarman, (Cambridge, 1998), 196–204; Nelly Hanna, "Culture in Ottoman Cairo," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ii, ed., M. Daly, (Cambridge, 1998), 87–112.

that of religious sciences, in all their variety, including books of *fiqh*, *tafsīr, ḥadīth*, as well as large numbers of commentaries (*sharḥ*), and many Sufi works, including saints' lives. Yet historical works are very present. They also show quite a variety of interests in the type of history writing. They include universal histories, histories of specific towns like Mecca or Jerusalem, as well as histories of Egypt, both Ottoman and Mamluk. The library of Amir Sulaymān Jawīsh Mustaḥfaẓān, containing some 75 books valued for 46,559 *niṣfs* of an inheritance worth slightly more than seven million *niṣfs*, included several major religious works (*Al-Muwaṭṭa'*, *Tafsīr al-Baydawī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Al-Sīra al-Ḥalabiyya*). Amongst the history books he owned were *Tarīkh Bayt al-Maqdis, Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī* and several historical works in Turkish with no title.[18] The library of Yaḥyā Efendi, the secretary (*kātīb*) of the Mustaḥfaẓān (worth 42,190 *niṣfs* of an inheritance totalling 169,885 *niṣfs*) had numerous religious books, literary works, and some history books, like *Al-Ǧumān fī Akhbār al-Ẓaman, Al-Tibr al-Masbūk*.[19] A third example, Muḥammad b. Fakhr al-Dīn (no profession indicated) with a more modest inheritance of 10432 *niṣfs*, had in his private library parts of the *Khiṭaṭ*, Isḥāqī's history, *Ḥuṣn al-Muḥādara*, and *Futūḥ Miṣr*.[20] Ownership of books was for obvious reasons more commonplace among wealthier people, but occasionally, ordinary people, a tradesman or an artisan, for instance, owned a few books. A closer examination of these private libraries could be very useful in indicating the way that tastes for books developed, and the preferences of the different social groups for particular subjects or works.

Historical works were in demand from another source: those who used them to be read out loud or for oral recitation. This form of transmission is worthy of special attention, in view of the fact that is was widespread, a fact that is well-documented, and that consequently may have reached substantially more people than written histories. It was influential in shaping the way many historical works were written. Recitation of historical works may have been encouraged by the spread of the institution of the coffee house, which started to become fashionable in Cairo from the mid-16th century and by the end of the 18th century had become very widespread

[18] *Qisma 'Askariyya*, register 147, case 108, dated 1152/1739, 96–110.
[19] *Qisma 'Askariyya*, register 153, case 881, dated 1157/1744, 512–515.
[20] *Qisma 'Arabiyya*, register 100, case 372, dated 1149/1736, 54–55.

in all parts of the city. Coffee houses were frequented by various social strata, especially artisans and traders, who were numerous in Cairo. Story telling was one of the forms of entertainment commonly taking place in these coffee houses. Siras, the heroic sagas, the stories of the Thousand and One Nights were standard repertoire of the coffee house. Included in the repertoire of the story tellers at coffee houses were the heroic deeds of the Mamluk Sultan, al-Ẓāhir Baybars (Sirat Baybars) and of Genghis Khan, works with a historical setting that combined history with and heroic verse.[21]

Reading out and reciting were by no means limited to the coffee house. We know from al-Nābulsī's work *Al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majaz* how frequently literary salons were held. When al-Nābulsī came to Cairo, he stayed with Shaykh al-Bakrī, at his house in al-Azbakiyya. He tells us the way their evenings were spent, either at his host's house or at someone else's house. At these gatherings people discussed specific issues of concern; they debated literary or religious questions, they read or composed verse, they listened to an improvisation in verse or prose, and so on. We gather from al-Nābulsī that these meetings were frequent occurrences, practically taking place every evening, at his host's house, or at the house of a friend or neighbour. al-Nābulsī goes on to tell us about the people who attended these gatherings, or *majlis*, (pl. *majalis*) as they were called, scholars, shaykhs from al-Azhar or from towns other than Cairo, Sufi shaykhs, government administrators and other men of learning and culture.[22] Thus in addition to the more public gatherings of the coffee house such meetings in houses offered opportunities to listen or to read out or to recite works of different kinds.

Even in the more private surroundings of the home, reading books out loud or reciting passages from them, seems to have been a common practice. This situation is described to us by the traveller Edward Brown who visited Cairo in 1674. Brown makes some very pertinent remarks which few other travelers have made with regard to the cultural situation and he observed that people had a considerable amount of interest in their history. He also had significant observations about the reading situation. He notes for example, how when

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[21] E.W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, (London, 1978, reprint 1989), 395.

[22] ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nābulsī, *Al-Ḥaqīqa wal-Majaz fi Rihla ila Bilad al-Sham wa Misr wal-Ḥijaz*, ed. Ahmad ʿAbd al-Majid al-Haridi, (Cairo, 1986), 202–205.

he was traveling with a friend called Ḥasan, he had a few sleepless nights and his friends told him to use the local remedy for insomnia. At first, Brown thought he was talking of hashish or opium but then found out what Ḥasan meant by the "Turkish" remedy: it was bed-time reading. His host, in fact, called in a young boy, who picked up a book and read until Brown fell asleep. The book was a history of the Abbasids.[23] It was rare, Brown noted, to find people who did not like books, an observation supported by archival evidence on the prevalence of history books in private libraries. Brown observed with astonishment the passion that people had for history and for the great events of the past. For those who could not read, he tells us, these were transmitted orally.[24] In this form, history entered the houses of many people as a commonplace pastime.

In this diverse and complex situation, various sectors of the population could be involved in some way with history. Some read books, others had books read out to them, others still listened while they were being recited. The enjoyment of history could be either a private affair in one's bedroom or home, an event taking place in a semi-private literary salon, in a public coffee house, or in the library of *madrasa*. The people who wrote historical works thus had a diverse public to address and diverse tastes and levels of sophistication to take into consideration.

Thus it is not surprising that during the Ottoman period in Egypt, historical writing should present us with a diversity of types of chronicles and histories: serious, well documented chronicles like that of al-Jabartī; light and entertaining histories like that of al-Ishaqi; well documented chronicles written in an easy language close to colloquial, like the Damūrdāshī chronicle and that of Aḥmad Shalabī ʿAbd al-Ghānī. The diversity of the public, with its different tastes and demands, can to a certain degree explain why some chronicles were more scholarly while others were more literary or popular in style. Moreover, the function of these histories served a variety of purposes. We know, for instance, that the Ottoman Sultans commissioned works of history which were often written in praise of the dynasty. Other works, like that of al-Jabartī, helped to consolidate the social position of the *ʿulamā'*.

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[23] Edward Brown, *Le Voyage en Egypte d'Edward Brown 1673–1674*, translated from English by Marie-Therese Breant, (Cairo, 1974), 53–55.

[24] Brown, *Voyage*, 167–8.

We can, from this perspective, understand the work of al-Jabartī within the context of his time rather than to perceive him as a unique phenomena or as an unexplainable enigma. The kind of history he wrote was read and appreciated by a certain strata in society, presumably limited in number, composed of people with a certain level of education.[25] His admirers, however, were not the only people who read historical works. History could reach other strata of people, unconnected to formal educational institutions, the semi-learned or the unlearned, who might be exposed to it in a coffee house.

This situation may well have helped to shape the historiography of the period. The internal evidence in some historical works indicates the existence of a link between the kind of audience or reader they were addressed to and the style of the work. Various features in the form and content of these works were developed to reflect the tastes of their readers. Thus social and cultural conditions had a bearing on what was written and how it was written.

One of these is language. In a number of histories and chronicles, the language that is used approaches the spoken language. These works make ample use of colloquial, of direct speech, often including grammatical structures which diverge from the "classical" or "correct" forms of the written word. One could explain this trend in more ways than one. For some observers, this use of incorrect language has been understood as a manifestation of the general decline of the Ottoman period. However, one could also explain this phenomena in relation to prevailing conditions, the demand from audiences for whom historical writing was not primarily an intellectual pursuit but a daily pastime; the influence of story-telling techniques, with their abundant use of colloquial and slang, of direct speech, and the lack of concern for grammatical correctness.

The mechanism that linked the oral and written word is still a matter of conjecture. We can only guess if the written histories were originally oral histories that were eventually put into writing, or the other way round. In her study on some 17th and 18th century chronicles, Madiha Doss, a linguist, noted a number of story telling features. The colloquial language, often in substandard Arabic, in Qīnalī's *Waqā'iʿ Miṣr al-Qāhira*, led her to suppose that there was an oral

[25] Ayalon, "The Historian al-Jabartī", 217.

origin to the chronicle.[26] This may have been the case in some works. In others, perhaps, a work may have been written then recited or read out loud. The writer might take this into consideration as he was composing his work. The significant point here is the fact that there was a close relationship between the written and the spoken word and that such works were made available to those who could not read or could not afford to buy books.

The use of verse was a relatively common practice in the writings of the time. Verse was used in works of grammar and jurisprudence, since it was thought that students would be able to memorize them with more ease. Histories written in verse were also current. One example is al-Ghamrī's *Dhakīrat al-ʿlām*, a chronicle covering the period up to 1040/1630.[27] Another is Shaykh Ḥasan al-Badrī al-Ḥijāzī. Although in his time, his reputation was mainly as a poet, not as a historian, he wrote frequently on topical events, or events of importance of his time, in verse rather than in prose. He described, for instance, the events which took place in Cairo in 1711 in which the different military factions in Cairo fought each other, commenting on the role of these factions, of the governor, of the *ʿulamāʾ* and of the reactions of common people with regard to the violence that ensued.[28] He had comments to make on many other notable events of his time, like the troubles that occurred when the zealous Turkish preacher gave sermons in Muʿayyad Mosque in 1711.[29] Ḥijāzī's work, perhaps *because* it was written in verse, has not received the consideration it deserves from scholars.

Another common technique used in historical writing which shows its affinity to oral literature is the use of rhyme: the history of ʿAlī al-Farrāʾ, which also narrates the events of 1711, is in prose that is almost entirely rhymed. At certain times, this is quite effective in building up the dramatic effect of the events he relates.[30] At other times, the narration of events is subordinated to his search for rhyme,

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[26] M. Doss, "Some Remarks on the Oral Factor in Arabic Linguistics," *Dialectologia Arabica, A Collection of Articles in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Heikki Palva*, (Helsinki, 1995), 54–59.

[27] Holt, "Ottoman Egypt", 6.

[28] al-Jabarti, *ʿAjaʾib*, i, 107.

[29] al-Jabarti, *ʿAjaʾib*, i, 49.

[30] ʿAli al-Farra, *Dhikr ma waqaʿa bayn ʿAskar al-Mahrusa al-Qahira*, edited by ʿAbd al-Qadir Ahmad Tulaymat, *Al-Majalla al-Tarikhiyya al-Misriyya*, 14, (1968), 321–404.

words or phrases are added to his story in order to create a rhyme, or a description is overextended in order to maintain it.

The language and style of some of these works made them more easily accessible to wider audience. Likewise, the content of some histories and chronicles could do the same. Many of the people who were involved in reading or listening to historical writing appreciated histories with a certain amount of entertainment, or which combined the facts that were narrated with some amusing stories. This is well illustrated in al-Isḥāqī's, *Laṭā'if Akhbār al-Uwal*, a history which goes from the early Islamic period to 1033/1623. In his introduction, al-Isḥāqī gives his view of history. It is an art (*fann*) which talks of the important events (*waqā'iʿ*) but at the same time is entertaining, including stories and anecdotes (*ḥikayāt, nawādir*) to amuse and to entertain the reader. The history that he wrote implemented these views. The techniques he uses in order to entertain his reader are varied. He interrupts his historical narrative in order to include an anecdote unrelated to the events he is writing about. Thus as he is relating the events occurring under the Umayyad caliph Yazīd, the narrative is interrupted in order to narrate a story taking place in Cairo. The story tells of a man, who, as he was walking in the Qarāfa cemetery, noticed a woman in tears standing by a tomb, mourning her husband. He found her extremely attractive and managed eventually to seduce her. She then uncovered her face and, to his astonishment, behind her veil, he saw the face of a man: he had been fooled into having relations with a person of the same sex, the details of the encounter being graphically narrated.[31] The audiences or readers for whom this was written would have found the sexual details and obscenities in the text provides very amusing.

In doing so, al-Isḥāqī was providing his audiences and readers *with what they wanted to hear*. In this he was successful. Although today we do not consider him among the great historians of Egypt, (Holt considered that al-Isḥāqī had acquired an unmerited importance through publication)[32] in his time, his work was greatly appreciated. We can measure this popularity by the fact that we have a large number of extant copies of his *Akhbār* that have survived. The Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris owns eleven copies of this work,

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[31] Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿti (al-Isḥāqī), *Laṭā'if Akhbār al-Uwal*, British Museum Manuscripts, Catalogue no. ADD 23,881, folios 44 to 46.

[32] Holt, "Ottoman Egypt," 6.

(Arabic manuscripts nos. 1839–1849) nine of which were copied in the 17th century and two in the 18th century. Numerous other copies exist in the National Library, Cairo, in the Süleymaniye in Istanbul, in Vienna, and in other libraries in Europe and elsewhere.[33] The manuscript, as this indicates, was copied over and over again.[34] One can only conclude that this was done because there was a great demand for this work and people were eager to read it. Not only did it contain a narration of historical events of important periods in Islamic history, but it also had many amusing stories and sexual obscenities which, especially if said out loud, an audience would have found hilarious. Thus both the language and the contents were aimed at pleasing numerous readers or listeners looking for light and entertaining histories, even if at the expense of the correct recording of events and proper use of language.

One could question the usefulness of the classification that is usually used for chronicles of the Ottoman period, dividing them into two categories, civilian chronicles and military chronicles. The military chronicles are those works essentially written on popular subjects by soldiers, focused on military battles, intended as entertainment for the troops in barracks. This classification does not appear to be satisfactory, firstly because it does not take into consideration the fact that anyone else than the *'ulamā'* and the military could be involved in reading historical works, whereas we have clear evidence to the contrary. Moreover, there is no clear evidence that the barracks were a place for cultural activity. If such were the case, we do not know that is such cultural activity was different from that in the civilian world, in coffee houses, for instance, where soldiers were likely to be present. The use of colloquial Arabic and of ungrammatical language may have been prevalent among soldiers as it may have been prevalent among artisans or traders.

This classification poses another problem. It assumes a clear-cut cultural divide between civilians and soldiers. In fact we know that in the 18th century, many civilians were enrolled in the *odjaqs* and were on military payrolls without necessarily having any military activities. Likewise, many soldiers and troops were involved in the economic life of the city, as artisans and traders. Chronicles or his-

[33] See nn. 14 and 31 above.

[34] Authors sometimes copied their works in several copies for commercial reasons, see al-Jabarti, *'Aja'ib*, i, 162 and i, 219.

tories written by members of the military could undergo the same influences, in their use of colloquial Arabic, of direct speech, and of a story-telling style, as those written by civilians. The frequent direct speech, the colloquial Arabic that were considered to be characteristic of military chronicles can, in fact, also be detected in "civilian" works like Aḥmad Shalabī ʿAbd al-Ghānī's *Awḍaḥ al-Ishārat fīman tawallā Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Bāshāt.*[35] It is more useful to consider these "military" chronicles as mainstream histories than as writings for a restricted group, or as expressions of a popular culture affecting both military and civilian.[36] We in fact know that al-Jabartī read them and used them in his work.[37]

One can discern a process of popularization of historical works, in the "consumption" of history. The beginning of the process is difficult to date, because we do not have comparable studies for earlier periods, but it seems to have been under way in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus what has been seen as a decline in history may in fact be considered a widening of demand for this type of work. As more people came to form the market for historical works, the histories that were written reflected this.

One can draw a number of conclusions about the histories and chronicles of Ottoman Egypt. First of all, they were not abstract productions, divorced from their social context, but quite the contrary, they were a form of expression of the environment which produced them. Secondly, historical works served a number of purposes. Some of them served to enhance the image of rulers. Others served to consolidate the position of scholars in society. But there were other functions as well, which we often do not pay much attention to: their function as expressions of the perspectives and outlooks of social groups who had lived outside of the power structure. The diversity in historical writing in this period is a reflection of the complex situation that produced it. By considering the writings that have so far been neglected by scholars, either because they were written in verse and were considered to be in the domain of literature, or

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[35] This work was edited by ʿAbd al-Rahim ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Rahim, Cairo, 1978.

[36] M. Doss, "Military Chronicles of 17th century Egypt As An Aspect of Popular Culture," 67–79.

[37] D. Crecelius, "Ahmad Shalabi Ibn ʿAbd al-Ghānī and Ahmad Katkhuda ʿAzaban al-Damūrdāshī: Two Sources for al-Jabartī's *ʿAja'ib al-Athār fi al-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār*," ed. Crecelius, *Arabic manuscript Sources*, 89–101.

because the accuracy of their information is disputable, or for any other reason, one can form a more global understanding of the historical production of the period and of the functions it fulfilled in society.

Methodologically, this interpretation allows us to make links between society and history and to define the social as well as the intellectual and political functions it could fulfill. It emphasizes the link between the persons who produced certain writings and their social environment. By examining historical production from this perspective, we can go beyond the cultural production for elites and understand the culture of this period from a broader angle.

EGYPTIAN HISTORY IN THE MODERN EGYPTIAN NOVEL

Paul Starkey

This paper will discuss some aspects of the development of the historical novel in modern Egyptian literature, with particular reference to the treatment of the history of medieval Egypt. My purpose in so doing is to illustrate some of the different ways in which, and the different purposes for which, Egyptian history (in particular, medieval history) has been used by modern writers of imaginative literature in Egypt; I shall illustrate my themes by reference to the works of authors whose works span a period of almost exactly a century, from the end of the nineteenth century to today.

The appearance of the novel form in modern Arabic literature dates from the time of the *nahḍa*, the literary and cultural 'revival', or 'renaissance', one of the main effects of which was the progressive substitution of Western for traditional Arabic forms as the main mode of literary expression in written prose—a process which lacks agreed start or end dates, but which was substantially completed during the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, by the time of the First World War.[1] A key factor in this process was the translation of works, both literary and non-literary, from Western languages (particularly French and English);[2] at first, works were selected for translation mainly for their functional value, but the Egyptian scholar al-Ṭahṭāwi's translation of Fénélon's *Télémaque*[3] set a precedent for the translation of literary works which was eagerly followed; among the works translated (often very unfaithfully, with adaptations, omissions and additions to reflect the different cultural *milieu*) were a number of novels with an historical flavour, among them those of Sir Walter Scott—the writer in English who

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[1] For the *nahḍa* generally, cf. M.M. Badawi (ed.), *Modern Arabic Literature* (*Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*), Cambridge, 1992, especially pp. 1–35.

[2] Cf., in particular, M. Peled, 'Creative translation: towards the study of Arabic translations of Western literature since the 19th century', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 10 (1979), 128–50.

[3] First published in Beirut in 1867.

is perhaps most particularly associated with the 'historical novel' during the early part of the nineteenth century.

It was indeed perhaps on the model of Scott's works[4] that the first serious historical novels in Arabic were produced, those of Jurjī [Jirjī] Zaydān.[5] Born in Beirut in 1861, Zaydān had originally intended to become a doctor, but he did not complete his studies; instead, following a path taken by many Syrian and Lebanese intellectuals in the second half of the nineteenth century, he emigrated to Egypt, where he developed an interest in history and literature, founding the journal *al-Hilāl* in 1892 and producing an astonishing range of works on historical and cultural topics as diverse as pre-Islamic Arabia, Arabic literature, the history of Islamic civilisation, Freemasonry, and the history of England. Though the originality of much of his work has been questioned (not surprisingly, in view of its diversity),[6] there can be little doubt that he played an important role as an educator and populariser during his lifetime, opening up new areas of cultural and historical interest to the rapidly-expanding reading public in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world.

Zaydān's historical novels (*riwāyāt ta'rīkhiya*) are, indeed, the product of an educator and populariser rather than of a novelist. His first novel, *al-Mamlūk al-sharīd*, published in 1891 before the founding of *al-Hilāl*, has a relatively recent historical setting, the period of Muḥammad 'Alī at the beginning of the nineteenth century; this was followed by two more novels with a relatively recent historical background, and he also later published a novel entitled *al-Inqilāb al-'Uthmānī*, about the Young Turk revolution; the remainder of his twenty-two novels, however, form a sequence, originally serialised in his own periodical *al-Hilāl*, covering the period from early Islamic history to the time of Ayyubid rule in Egypt, and deliberately conceived in a series, with the explicit aim of imparting a sense of Arab and Islamic history to their readers. Their original mode of serial publication is betrayed by their short, and generally self-contained, chapters, while their didactic purpose is confirmed

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[4] At least, according to A. Hourani. Cf. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, (London, 1962), 277.

[5] On Zaydān (probably the first Arab intellectual to use the term *nahḍa*), cf. T. Philipp, *Ǧurǧī Zaydān: His Life and Thought*, (Beirut, 1979).

[6] On this, cf. Jack A. Crabbs, *The Writing of History in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, (Detroit, 1984), esp., 192–3.

by the title-pages which accompany many editions, detailing the subject-matter to be found in the pages within, as for example:

> *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, a historical novel containing a description of Egypt and the land of Nubia in the middle of the third century AH at the time of Amad ibn Tulun, including a description of its political, social and literary circumstances, the relations between the Copts and rulers, the political relations between Egypt and Nubia, a description of the Buǰǰa, etc.[7]

From a literary point of view, Zaydān's novels—though undoubtedly an advance on most others produced before—strike the modern critic, both stylistically and thematically, as almost unbearably pedestrian. It is perhaps partly for this reason that, although their easy style has ensured that they continue to be popular with many Arab readers and they have been many times reprinted, they have received comparatively little detailed critical attention of late. Thomas Philipp's recent study of Zaydān, for example,[8] devotes about a page and a half[9] out of a total of roughly 250 pages to the historical novels. Most literary histories of modern Egypt make mention of these works and concede their importance in 'establishing literary fiction as a principal literary form', but they often seem to be regarded largely as a prelude to better things to come.[10] The reasons for this neglect are not far to seek. As has many times been pointed out, Zaydān's characterisation is weak and one-dimensional, there is little development of character, and the historical elements are not satisfactorily integrated with the other elements of the plot—which in turn usually revolve around a hero and heroine in love. Zaydān's narrative technique is basic in the extreme, the plot almost invariably advancing by means of a sequence of past-tense verbs ('this happened, then that happened')—a point that may be illustrated by a chapter taken at random from *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, in which Dimyāna seeks refuge from her persecutors in a church with Zakariyā, her servant: the first seven paragraphs of the chapter, describing a series of actions, all begin with perfect-tense verbs (*'waṣalat', 'dakhalat', 'wa-sakatat',*

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[7] Title page from *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, Cairo, n.d.

[8] Cf. above, note 5.

[9] Philipp, *Ǧurǧī Zaydān*, 235–6.

[10] Cf., for example, P. Cachia, *An Overview of Modern Arabic Literature*, (Edinburgh, 1990), 112–3 (from where the words quoted are taken); M.M. Badawi, *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature*, (Oxford, 1993), 97–8.

'thumma aḥassat', 'fa-adraka', 'fa-mashat', 'thumma sāra'); while the second half of the chapter consists of a conversation between the two characters, in which the short units of dialogue are invariably introduced by *qāla* or *qālat*, as appropriate.[11] In order to emphasise the power of prayer, Zaydān incongruously inserts a quotation from the nineteenth-century religious reformer Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī.[12] While it is not difficult to understand the appeal of Zaydān's prose—a world removed from the stylistic intricacies of classical *adab*—for his contemporaries, it is equally understandable that his novels (the style of which has something of the woodenness of a school textbook) found few, if any, direct imitators. Nonetheless, a reappraisal of these works seems somewhat overdue: for example, did Zaydān (a Christian) put forward any particular, or any new, interpretation, of Islamic history in these works? Though the answer to this question is almost certainly negative, it at least seems worth asking.

The development of the Egyptian historical novel in the period between the two World Wars is characterised by the same dichotomy that marked Egyptian intellectual life generally during this period: the dichotomy between the 'Pharaonic' trend of those who emphasised the ancient Egyptian aspect of the national character and consciousness, and those who chose to emphasise the Arab and Islamic heritage. Among the former, the best-known examples of 'historical novels' proper are perhaps the three early novels of Najīb Maḥfūẓ—*'Abath al-Aqdār, Rādūbīs and Kifāḥ Ṭība*, written respectively in 1939, 1943 and 1944; in the last-mentioned of these (dealing with the struggle of the ancient Egyptians against the foreign rule of the Hyksos invaders from the North) we can see the use of a technique to which we shall have reason to return later: the use of the past as a mirror for the present—for the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egyptian soil is clearly a metaphor, or analogue, for the ending of foreign rule or influence in Egypt, British or Turkish as it may be.[13] Najīb Maḥfūẓ was to return to Ancient Egypt some forty years later in his novels *Amāma al-'Arsh* and *al-'A'ish fī'l-ḥaqīqa*, the former of which establishes a link between the present and the past by pre-

[11] *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, 129ff.
[12] *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, 129.
[13] On Maḥfūẓ's early novels, cf. R. El-Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz: The Pursuit of Meaning*, London, 1993, pp. 35–42; Sakkut, op. cit., pp. 72–76.

senting a survey of the rulers of Egypt from Menes to Anwar al-Sadat.[14]

It may be worth remarking at this point that the setting of a novel in a particular historical period (an essential characteristic of the 'historical novel' proper)[15] is not the only technique by which history, or the lessons to be drawn from it, may be made to bear upon the present in a literary context. The most obvious, and powerful, expression of Pharaonism in novel form is probably Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's *ʿAwdat al-Rūḥ* (1933), in which the author holds up the contemporary Egyptian *fallāḥ* as an idealised descendant of the ancient Egyptian, suggesting that if Egypt could recapture the spirit of the builders of the Pyramids, it could also regain its past greatness.[16] Al-Ḥakīm's novel, however, is set not in Pharaonic times but in Egypt of the early twentieth century, the lessons to be drawn from the past being introduced in dialectical fashion, through discussion between the characters—a quite different technique from that of the `historical novel' proper, and one which sets al-Ḥakīm's work apart from most of the other works discussed here.

It is hard to find in the other twin strand of Egyptian nationalism of this period (the reappraisal of Egypt's Islamic and Arab past) works of the stature of the Pharaonic novels of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm and Najīb Maḥfūẓ. Although many Egyptian intellectuals of the period (Ṭāḥā Ḥusayn, ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal among them) were engaged in the reevaulation of the Islamic heritage, their productions tended to eschew the novel form. Many works concentrated on the Prophet and early caliphs rather than on later Egyptian history, the biographical form being especially popular; Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, best known as a dramatist, even produced a biography of the Prophet in the form of a play.[17] Nevertheless, a few novels of interest did appear in which an Egyptian historical setting played an important part. Among the most significant was

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[14] Cf. El-Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz*, 42–6.

[15] The 'historical novel' is defined in M. Drabble (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford, 1985, as 'a novel set in a period before the birth of the author, and often containing not only fictional but historical people and/or events'. For a general discussion, cf. Gyorgy Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, (London, 1962).

[16] On *ʿAwdat al-Rūḥ* cf. P. Starkey, *From the Ivory Tower*, (London, 1987), 84–92, 118–29.

[17] On this, see M.M. Badawi, 'Islam in modern Egyptian literature', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 2 (1971), 154–77.

Muḥammad Farīḍ Abū Ḥadīd's early work *Ibnat al-Mamlūk* (1926), set during the early years of Muḥammad ʿAlī's reign during his struggles with the Mamluks in 1804–7.[18] The atmosphere of political intrigue makes an effective background to the events of the story and Abū Ḥadīd's technique represents a significant advance on that of Jurjī Zaydān; although he preserves Zaydān's basic formula (a tale of romance in a historical setting) Abū Ḥadīd is more successful in integrating the romantic and historical elements—even allowing for some unlikely historical touches such as the heroine's knowledge of artificial respiration!

Like Zaydān, Abū Ḥadīd's purpose in writing *Ibnat al-Mamlūk* was partly at least a didactic one, and in similar vein he went on to produce some four further historical novels—none of which, however, is specifically centred on Egypt. Another interesting production, set in an earlier, but even more traumatic, period of Egyptian history, was Muḥammad Saʿīd al-ʿIryān's[19] *ʿAlā Bāb Zuwayla*, published in 1947. Set in Egypt between 1490 and 1517 during the period immediately preceding the Otttoman conquest, the novel perhaps comes closer than any of the works discussed previously to one of the classic definitions of the 'historical novel' proper, whose aim, it has been suggested [by George Lukács] should be 'not only to depict historical events but also to portray the human and psychological situations leading to them and resulting from them'.[20] ʿIryān makes a valiant attempt to explain the complex sequence of political events which heralded the death-throes of the Egyptian Mamluk period by trying to unearth the motives and emotions of those involved. In common with most of the works already described, the novel contains a subsidiary plot in which the author introduces non-historical material; this consists, in the present case, not of a romantic love-story as in Muḥammad Abū Ḥadīd's *Ibnat al-Mamlūk*, but of a story about the parentage of Ṭūmānbay, and his mother's quest to seek her son—a quest which fails, as Ṭūmānbay is hanged on the Zuwayla Gate before his mother can be reunited with him.[21] Like Zaydān and Abū Ḥadīd, ʿIryān (a graduate of the educational institution

[18] On Abū Ḥadīd, see H. Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel*, 48–60.

[19] Sometimes transliterated as al-ʿUryān (e.g. by P. Cachia; cf. note 22 below).

[20] Lukács, *Historical Novel*, 42, quoted in Sakkut, *Egyptian Novel*, 57.

[21] On ʿIryān's novels, in particular *ʿAlā Bāb Zuwayla*, cf. Sakkut, *Egyptian Novel*, 60–62.

Dār al-ʿUlūm) appears to have been using the novel partly, at least, for educational purposes—his aim being to bring history to life in a way difficult to achieve through the conventional type of text book. Pierre Cachia has also suggested that there is a nationalist element in the work—Ṭūmānbay's resistance to the Ottoman invasion being presented as the action of a patriot putting Egypt's interests first, though how much truth there may be in that suggestion is difficult to tell.[22]

The beginning of the 1950s saw a radical change in the prevailing mood among Arab writers, attributable partly to political developments (in particular, the Palestine War of 1948 and the Free Officers' Revolution of 1952), partly to the influence of new Western intellectual currents (notably Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism). The result of these various influences was the growth of various forms of 'committed literature', in which various combinations of Marxism, existentialism and Arab nationalism are readily discernible;[23] from this point on, the concept of commitment (*iltizām*) was one which no Egyptian, or Arab, writer could ignore. In this new mood of grim realism, the 'historical novel' based on an ancient Egyptian or medieval Islamic setting appears to have been forced decisively into a back seat; certainly, there was no place for the sort of Egyptian triumphalism which had marked Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's *ʿAwdat al-Rūḥ*. Even in the new social and political context, however, history had its uses. If one had to select a single work epitomising the new mood, the most likely candidate would probably be ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sharqāwī's (1920–87) *al-Arḍ*, first published in 1954 and recently described as 'arguably the most widely known work of modern Arabic fiction both inside and beyond the Near and Middle East'.[24] (The work is in fact probably better known to the average Egyptian through Yūsuf Shāhīn's popular film version than through the book itself.) In the course of the novel, which is set in the early 1930s during the dictatorship of Ismāʿīl Sidqī, a number of struggles are acted out between the oppressed inhabitants of a Delta village and the authorities, in the course of which al-Sharqāwī gives us a vivid picture of a number

[22] Cf. Cachia, *Overview*, 174.

[23] On commitment, cf. M.M. Badawi, "Commitment in contemporary Arabic literature", *Journal of World History* 14 (1972), 858–79, reprinted in I.J. Boullata (ed.), *Critical Perspectives on Modern Arabic Literature*, (Washington, D.C.), 1980, 23–44.

[24] Cf. Robin Ostle, intro. to reissued translation of *Egyptian Earth*, by P. Stewart, (London, 1990), p. xi.

of village 'types' (schoolteacher, smallholder, *'umda* and imam)—the realism of the description being considerably enhanced by the use of dialogue in vigorous colloquial. Although writing of events during the 1930s, however, al-Sharqāwī was almost certainly expressing an unspoken fear about the future course of developments under the Free Officers' regime—the use of historical analogies to comment on contemporary developments being an obvious (though not always totally effective) device among writers not only in Egypt but also elsewhere in the Arab world for evading, or at least diverting, the attentions of the censor.

A good example in dramatic form of this technique from a slightly later date is provided by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's play *al-Sulṭān al-Ḥā'ir* (1960), set in Egypt of the Mamluk period (the precise date is unspecified), which revolves around the system whereby slaves from the bodyguards of the Sultans were granted freedom and brought up to rule the country.[25] Doubts raised in the play about whether the Sultan in question has actually been freed lead to the central question of the play (which clearly has a wider relevance): should the problem be resolved through the law or by force?[26] In his introduction to the published edition of the play, al-Ḥakīm suggests that the question was intended to relate to the contemporary international situation, when the tensions of the Cold War had entered a particularly dangerous phase; he later made clear, however, that the play's concern was at least as much with domestic as with international politics, and that the work was intended as a warning to Nasser about the repressive methods being employed within Egypt itself.[27]

The Mamluk period which forms the subject for 'Iryān's novel *Ibnat al-Mamlūk* and the backdrop for Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's play *al-Sulṭān al-Ḥā'ir* is also the setting for one of the most accomplished novels by a contemporary Egyptian author, Jamāl al-Ghīṭānī—an author who, perhaps more than any other of his generation, has deliberately set out to draw on the literary and historiographical heritage of the classical period in his writing.[28] A member of the so-

[25] On this system, cf. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Mamlūk'. For an English translation of the play, cf. F. Abdel Wahab, *Modern Egyptian Drama*, (Minneapolis and Chicago, 1974), 41–153.

[26] *Al-Sulṭān al-Ḥā'ir*, 79.

[27] On this, cf. Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, *'Awdat al-Waʿy*, (Beirut, 1974), 61, quoted in Cachia, *Overview*, 163–4.

[28] For a general discussion of al-Ghīṭānī, cf. S. Mehrez, *Egyptian Writers Between*

called 'generation of the sixties', whose writing reflects the mood of disillusion that permeated the Arab world after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, al-Ghīṭānī was born in 1945 and trained for some time as a carpet-weaver (a craft which appears to have influenced his literary technique). His first full-length novel, *al-Ẓaynī Barakāt*, was published in Damascus in 1974, having been written in 1970–71 immediately after the death of President ʿAbd al-Nāṣir. The book again illustrates the technique already mentioned—the use of an historical period as an analogy for the present. Set in early sixteenth-century Cairo during the reign of the Mamluk Sultan al-Ghawrī, just before the Ottoman invasion of Egypt in 1517, the work takes as its 'hero' al-Zaynī Barakāt b. Mūsā, a historical figure who served as *muḥtasib* of Cairo for some twenty years from AD 1505, surviving in office after the military collapse of the Mamluks into the first years of Ottoman rule. The picture that emerges of al-Zaynī is an ambiguous one: we never decisively establish whether he is working in the interests of the people or manipulating both the people and the Mamluks themselves. He is, however, both an opportunist and a survivor, and in this, as in his almost puritanical obsession with reform, he is a clear metaphor for Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, whose survival of the defeat in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 parallels al-Zaynī's survival of the Mamluk defeat of 1517. Mamluk Egypt, with its (admittedly, largely fictional) interlocking networks of spies and informers, is a fitting symbol for the police state of contemporary Nasserist Egypt; while in Saʿīd al-Juhaynī we can see al-Ghīṭānī's own generation of disillusioned Egyptians, brought up on the ideology of Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir but progressively destroyed and disillusioned by the system.

From a literary point of view, we may note that al-Ghīṭānī's work continues the tradition established in Arabic by Jurjī Zaydān of deliberately mingling historical and fictitious events and personalities (al-Zaynī himself is an historical personality, as are a number of other characters; others, however, are not). But al-Ghīṭānī's purpose and techniques are a good deal more complex than Zaydan's. In al-Ghīṭānī's structurally complex work, time sequences are deliberately disturbed, and the character of al-Zaynī Barakāt is glimpsed from

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History and Fiction (Cairo, 1994), 58–77, 96–118; and S. Mehrez, 'Hypertext as Bricolage . . .', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1985.

the viewpoint of a number of different characters (including a totally fictitious Venetian traveller, whose diaries are quoted to provide something of the perspective of an outsider). None of this will, of course, cause much surprise to the reader of contemporary Western fiction; in an Arabic context, however, the technique (though not without precedent)[29] is strikingly original. Most interesting from a historiographical point of view, we may note that al-Ghīṭānī quotes the Egyptian historian Ibn Iyās's (1448–c. 1524) work *Badā'iʿ al-zuhūr fī waqā'iʿ al-duhūr verbatim* on a number of occasions, sometimes explicitly, sometimes not. Moreover, the work contains a number of 'fictitious' medieval documents (proclamations, documents and the like) in which al-Ghīṭānī deliberately sets out to imitate, or parody, medieval style.[30] This is not the same as Zaydān's technique: although Zaydān also sometimes quotes his sources in his historical novels (sometimes to the extent of footnoting them),[31] he makes little attempt to integrate them into the literary work and no attempt to blur the dividing-line between fact and fiction; in al-Ghīṭānī's work, on the other hand, the dividing-line between fiction and fact (or at least, fact as related by Ibn Iyās) is deliberately blurred: when al-Ghīṭānī's fictitious Venetian traveller quotes the historical Ibn Iyās, the reader has no means of telling from the text alone which text is genuine and which invented, unless it be on the basis of information derived from outside al-Ghīṭānī's text itself. In the context of a work of twentieth-century fiction, we may applaud the firm touch of al-Ghīṭānī's technique in merging fact and fiction so readily together, while noting that in other contexts the inclusion of quotations from other writers (a characteristic of much Islamic prose writing, both fictional and non-fictional) raises problems of interpretation, some of which are alluded to elsewhere in this volume.[32]

The use which al-Ghīṭānī makes of Ibn Iyās's medieval text in *al-Ẓaynī Barakāt* to construct his own 'hypertext' is parallelled by his use of newspapers and official reports in his second novel, *Waqā'iʿ Ḥārat al-Ẓa'farānī* (1976),[33] which, like its predecessor, deals with issues

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[29] Cf., for example, Maḥfūẓ's novel *Mīrāmār* (1967), discussed in El-Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz*, 113–5.

[30] On this, cf. Mehrez, 'Bricolage as Hypertextuality', 78–134.

[31] Cf., for example, *Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn*, 10, 16 etc.

[32] Cf., for example, above, pp. 000 [for HNK].

[33] An English translation by Peter O'Daniel has been published as *Incidents in Zafrani Alley*, (Cairo, 1986).

of power and coercion, this time in the setting of a working-class Cairo quarter—a context not directly relevant to our theme. In his later works, however, al-Ghīṭānī again returns to the medieval literary tradition. His novel *Khiṭaṭ al-Ghīṭānī*, published in 1980, is of particular interest in the present context, for the author here turns directly to the Egyptian medieval historiographical tradition, parodying the literary form and stylistic characteristics of the medieval *khiṭaṭ* with chapter divisions such as *al-maydān al-kabīr*, *al-shāriʿ al-awwal* etc. in order to create, as it were, a fictional *khiṭaṭ* of modern Egypt. Unlike a traditional *khiṭaṭ* text, however, the headings provide reference points not only for topographically based descriptions, but also for a fictional narrative which quickly reveals its contemporary relevance: significantly, in al-Ghīṭānī's contemporary Cairo, the most important building is the *mabnā al-anbāʾ*, from which the thoughts of the populace can be controlled, while little imagination is required to equate al-Ustādh with Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir. The relationship to contemporary political events become still more explicit when al-Ustādh disappears, to be replaced by al-Tanūkhī, under whose authority corruption becomes even more rife as he is caught up in a war with *al-Aʿdāʾ* ('the enemies')—a clear reference to Sadat's capitulation (as perceived, at least, by a large section of the Egyptian intelligentsia) to the Israelis, manifested most obviously in his visit to Jerusalem in 1977.[34] Equally of interest, though of less direct relevance to the present paper, is al-Ghīṭānī's most ambitious work to date, *Kitāb al-Tajalliyāt* (3 vols, 1983–86), which uses Ibn ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiya* as a source-text for a work which mingles personal, autobiographical and mystical elements with social and political criticism of contemporary Egypt.

Jamāl al-Ghīṭānī is widely acknowledged as one of the most accomplished writers of his generation, not only in Egypt but in the Arab world generally. It is clear that, despite some superficial similarities (to which we have made some reference), a world of difference separates his work from that of Jurjī Zaydān and the other pioneers of the novel form in Arabic. At the risk of over-simplification, one might perhaps say that Zaydān—a polymath, and an educator—saw fiction

[34] For another example, cf. Yūsuf al-Qaʿīd's *Shakāwā al-Miṣrī al-faṣīḥ* (Cairo, 1983–85), discussed in Paul Starkey, 'From the City of the Dead to Liberation Square', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 25 (1993), 62–74; C. Holes, *Modern Arabic*, (London, 1995), 307–9.

as a sort of educational aid, which he was happy to use as a means to promote a knowledge of history; in Ghīṭānī's work, on the other hand, history, and historical writing, are themselves harnessed in the service of a fictional technique that goes far beyond the 'historical novel', as usually defined. Between the two, chronologically speaking, we have caught a hint of nationalism, in its various forms, with its potential for harnessing both fiction and history to its cause. Zaydān's novels, constantly read but critically forgotten, to my mind await a reevaluation. In the meantime, I hope that the present paper may have gone some way to sketch out some of the permutations of the relationship between history and fiction in the modern Egyptian novel, and to suggest some areas for further investigation.

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